This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Biog C
a203 Ripley

MRS SAMUEL RIPLEY

Mrs William Durgin
With much love from
Mary E. Simmons.

MRS SAMUEL RIPLEY

By Elizabeth Hoar.

FROM

"WORTHY WOMEN OF OUR FIRST CENTURY"

J B LIPPINCOTT & CO
PHILADELPHIA
1877

LIBRARY OF
HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL
Gift of
Mrs. Henry W. Foote,
10 May, 1890

MRS. SAMUEL RIPLEY.

CHAPTER I.

In gathering up the treasures of the last century, some record has been desired of the life of Mrs. Sarah Alden Ripley, of Massachusetts.

Mrs. Ripley was known and revered in the region where she lived, as one who combined rare and living knowledge of literature and science with the household skill and habits of personal labor needful to New England women of limited means, and with the tenderest affection and care for the young brothers and sisters whom her mother's delicate health and death left to her charge, and for the seven children of her own marriage who grew up under her eye in the country parsonage at Waltham. To the ordinary cares of her station were added those of assisting her husband in the cares of a boys' boarding-school, both in housekeeping and teaching. These claims were met with disinterested devotion. And amid all the activity of her busy life the love and habit of acquiring knowledge, which was the life of her age as of her ardent youth, kept even pace.

To a friend has now been committed the trust of making some selections from Mrs. Ripley's letters written in youth, in early married life, in the later days when her children had grown up and rest seemed approaching, and in the last days at the "Old Manse" in Concord, her husband's paternal inheritance, to which they had retired in the spring of 1846, as a paradise of rest in age. The letters thus arrange themselves in four chapters. As a continuous history of events, they leave many gaps unfilled. At times of domestic changes,

whether joyful or sorrowful, the family, never widely scattered, drew at once together, and there was no need of letters in the personal presence of filial and friendly sympathy. The friends also who were dearest to her youth and middle life were all within a near circle of residence. Thus, as to many of the most interesting events of her life, no written record from her hand remains.

No better sketch of Mrs. Ripley can be found than the memorial written by Mr. R. W. Emerson at the time of her death. This will be found upon a later page. Their friendship had begun early and lasted long. Mr. Emerson's aunt, Miss Mary Emerson, the half-sister of Mr. Ripley, was a woman of genius, who had much influence in the early training of Mr. Emerson and his brothers. She had heard of the young Sarah Bradford and sought her out* in the household retreat in Boston where she devoted to study the time unclaimed by domestic duties; and the friendship which followed included the Emerson children† so dear to the elder lady. After Miss Bradford's marriage the claims of kindred also brought these boys to their uncle Ripley's house in school and college vacations, and the intercourse so precious to both sides was never interrupted but by death.

Mr. F. B. Sanborn, who in Mrs. Ripley's later years at Concord became very valuable to her as a companion in study and an affectionate minister to her enjoyment in many kind offices of friendship, wrote at the time of her death about her early studies thus: "It should be remembered that in the early part of this century, when Mrs. Ripley laid the foundation of her extensive knowledge of languages, of philosophy and literature, the aids to study were few and imperfect in

---

* See Mrs. Ripley's letter to Mr. Simmons of October 7, 1844.

† The names of the Emerson children, excepting two who died very young, were William, Ralph Waldo, Edward Bliss, Peter Bulkeley, and Charles Chauncy. Edward and Charles died in early manhood; they were young men of the greatest promise: their death is commemorated by their brother in his poem entitled "Dirge." In the "May Day and Other Pieces" is another tribute to the memory of Edward.

New England. A good dictionary of Latin or Greek did not exist in English; editions of the ancient authors were rare and often very poor, while of the modern languages, except the French, scarcely anything was known in all this region. But the difficulties in the way did not prevent Mrs. Ripley from acquiring rapidly, and with sufficient correctness, a knowledge of the Latin, Greek, French, and Italian languages, and subsequently the German; with the literature of all which she became familiar, and kept up this familiarity till her failing strength made study, and even reading, irksome."

Wherever it is possible, the editor will avail herself of the reminiscences of Mrs. Ripley's friends in giving such explanation as is necessary for connecting the different series of letters with each other. But the letters themselves will best report the life of the writer.

Sarah Alden Bradford was born in Boston, July 31, 1793, and was the eldest child of Captain Gamaliel Bradford. Two brothers followed her, Gamaliel, afterwards a well-known physician and citizen of Boston, and Daniel, who studied law, and died early in Mississippi. Then followed two sisters, Martha, afterwards the wife of Dr. Josiah Bartlett, of Concord, Massachusetts, and Margaret, the wife of Mr. Seth Ames, now one of the justices of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. George, her youngest brother, whom she almost wholly educated up to the time when he entered Harvard College, and Hannah, her youngest sister, who was the wife and is now the widow of the late Mr. A. H. Fiske, a prominent lawyer in Boston, completed the number of seven children, to the three youngest of whom Sarah stood in the place of a mother: her own children were not nearer to her heart. Her father, who was a sea-captain, was often absent on voyages, and her mother's delicate health gave to the eldest daughter, as she grew up, a large share in the care of this numerous family. The youngest brother and sister still survive.

Sarah attended a school taught by Mr. Cummings, well known in days long past as the author of a school geography, of whom she speaks in one of her latest letters as "my old

school-master, to whom I owe the foundation of all I know worth speaking of." Her teacher asked her one day if she would like to study Latin. It was a fortnight before she could make up her mind to ask her father's leave, but one day she came home and with great timidity said, "Father, may I study Latin?" Her father laughed, and exclaimed, "A girl study Latin! Yes, study Latin if you want to. You may study anything you please." This, as it will be seen, was opening the door into a wide field.

Captain Bradford's father and other relatives lived in Duxbury, near Plymouth. In her occasional visits to this place Sarah had formed an intimate friendship with Abba Allyn, the daughter of Dr. Allyn, the minister of Duxbury. He himself took an especial interest in his daughter's young friend, to which she never ceased to respond in grateful acknowledgment. The girls read together, and explored the woods and swamps in company, looking wistfully at the flowers they gathered, longing for knowledge to detect the laws and secrets of nature. After one of these visits, Sarah wrote to her friend Abba a formal little letter proposing a correspondence. The proposal was accepted, and the first selection from Mrs. Ripley's letters will be a few from the earlier ones in the life-long series which passed between the two friends. The first letter, to which I have referred, is duly dated, "April 15th, 1809." But this is almost the only date in the whole series: so that the editor can only guess at the order in which the letters followed each other by the increased freedom of the style and handwriting, and by the order of studies and topics, when a new book rises to mark the progress of the months; as in Dante's pilgrimage the hours and seasons are marked only by the succession of the constellations. The correspondence, as I have said, began in 1809. The Bradford family afterwards spent a year in Duxbury, returning to Boston in 1811. After that time the letters continued with confidence and affection unabated, and the friendship never ceased through life.

MISS BRADFORD TO MISS ALLYN.

[About 1809.]

"MY DEAR ABBA,—

"I am sorry to perceive that you have greatly mistaken the motive which has induced me lately to mix less with the world than heretofore. You ascribe it to depression of mind, for which you entreat me to assign a reason. You are much deceived, my friend. God has continually blessed me since I came into this world, and I should be very ungrateful if I were discontented or unhappy. He has given me life, and hereafter I shall be accountable to him for the manner in which I have improved the time and privileges afforded me. At present I am favored with the means of acquiring useful knowledge. If, instead of employing the season of youth in improving my mind, I spend it in idle visiting, in preparing for balls and parties, neglecting the advantages afforded me, can I reasonably expect that they will always be continued to me? I do not intend to give up all society; I only intend to relinquish that from which I can gain no good. Be assured I wish to conceal nothing from you, and if I were in affliction your participation would greatly lessen it. Write to me the manner in which you employ your time. Your papa informed me you had become an adept in spinning. Have you begun Virgil? I must bid you good-by, my dearest and best friend, and it is my earnest desire that you may be happy in this world and that which is to come. Don't expose this letter.

"S. A. B."

"As the spring advances I am more and more desirous to be with you. The grass in our yard begins to look green, and the lilac-trees have leaved. We consider our yard and garden quite a farm in comparison with the yards belonging to the new-fashioned houses, which are in general about as large as your back room. So that, although I am not in the country, I am better off than many of my neighbors. Do you find any pretty wild flowers? If you have never examined a dan-

delion flower, you will find it very curious,—the downy wings of the seeds, by which they are scattered far and wide, the perfect uniformity of the little flowers, each with its pistil and five stamens, united by the anthers, the filaments separate, almost too small to be distinguished with the naked eye. The same order, regularity, and beauty are visible in the least as in the greatest works of creation. Do you think a dandelion could have been the work of chance? Surely that study cannot be entirely useless which can make even this most despised of flowers a source of admiration and entertainment, a demonstration of the hand of a Creator. I saw the other evening in one of our neighbors' yards a Lombardy poplar in full bloom, a sight I never saw before; but, as my face was swollen with the ague, I could not get a blossom. I believe they are of the same class as the balsam poplar, which I have often seen in bloom. Father has frequently recommended to me a poem called Darwin's Botanic Garden. I think I can borrow it at Judge Davis's; and I am determined to bring it to Duxbury with me, that we may enjoy it together."

In a later letter she says,—

"There are to be botanical lectures next winter in Boston, but I suppose the pine woods must be our lecture-room, and nature our herbalist."

In another letter, after analyzing for her friend the Linnæan System and Darwin's Botanic Garden, her last book, she ends, "But it is washing-day, and I must run and fold my clothes: so good-by. . . . The clothes are not quite dry, so here I come again. I thought at first I would read a little; but when I get in a notion of writing to you I can attend to nothing else till the rage is over. I study or read morning and evening, when not prevented by company. How we might improve these long winter evenings together!"

[1809.]

"Your letter found me in company with one of my Greek acquaintance; but he was obliged to yield to the superior claims of friendship. I cannot sufficiently thank you for it, affectionate and entertaining as it was. The poem* I have long wished to read, written, by the way, by the biographer of our favorite Cowper,—*our* favorite, I say, for I am sure you cannot have read half through his life and not love him as well as I do. He is a most engaging character. Perhaps you may think him a little vain in making his own compositions so frequently the subjects of his letters, particularly his translations of Homer. But I can readily find in my own feelings an excuse for him. How interested I feel in anything you are engaged in! How eager I am to know every step you take in Virgil, etc.! So anxious for the success and fame of her friend was Lady Hesketh that he well knew the most minute details would be interesting to her. . . . A dreadful apprehension of having forfeited the divine favor by his imperfections (when perhaps there was never a man who had less reason for such a fear) seems to have been the occasion of that melancholy which shaded the whole course of his life and especially obscured the end, which so strongly awakens the feeling of sympathy. Do you not relish much more his pleasing descriptions since you know 'his praise of nature most sincere, raptures not conjured up to serve the purpose of poetic pomp, but genuine'? I am delighted to hear you do not desert our old friend Virgil. You need not fear I shall be jealous of any share he may have in your friendship. I have not read anything new since I wrote you, but jog on in the same old road. I have finished Homer's Odyssey, and wish to read the Iliad very much. Your papa has one with a Latin translation, and, if he does not use it this winter, by lending it to me he will add another great obligation to the many he has conferred upon me. You mentioned in one of your last letters an abundance of new story-books,

* Hayley's "Triumphs of Temper."

such as 'Vivian,' etc. I hope Daniel will read some of them to me this long vacation, that I may be able in company to bear some part in the conversation, for they are the only fashionable topics. Dear Abba, since I wrote you I have commenced acquaintance with a Miss Emerson,* a sister of our minister, a pious and sensible woman, between thirty and forty years of age. She was so kind as to make the first advances by calling on me; and from her society I expect to derive the greatest advantages: she appears extremely interested in the religious improvement of the young. When I consider what a price there is put in my hands to gain wisdom, I am alarmed at the little progress I have made in a knowledge of the things that concern my eternal peace. Good-night.

"Your friend, SARAH."

The following was marked by Miss Emerson, "First letter of her childhood in friendship."

MISS BRADFORD TO MISS EMERSON.

[About 1809.]

"DEAR, DEAR MARY,—

"I am afraid you will hear no more about satiety and disgust of life. With every rising dawn your idea is associated. The day no longer presents in prospect an unvaried tasteless round of domestic duties. Bright gleams of hope illumine the dull perspective. The mellow rays of the declining sun sweep the chords of love. Oh that they ceased to vibrate with the gentle touch! Your idea intrudes too often on the hallowed hours. But it will not be always thus. The affection whose object is so pure, so heavenly, cannot, will not, forever militate with devotion. Once convinced the chains are riveted, suspicion, dread to have disgusted or offended, will give place to calm reposing satisfaction. How delightful the thought that

* See Mrs. Ripley's letter to Mr. Simmons of October 7, 1844, for an account of Miss Emerson and of the beginning of their acquaintance.

our religion sanctions friendship! How does worldliness dry up every spring of pure affection, chill every generous, glowing emotion! I was bantered a little at tea about violent romantic attachments. I was bold in the defense of disinterested friendship. My mother considers it a delusion, innocent as to its object, rather dangerous as to its effects, making me unsteady, as she terms it. But you told me once you hated sentimental epistles. May everything that can make life's journey pleasant be yours in perfection!"

"I was peaceably poring over old Josephus when your affectionate letter came. Its seal was broken with delightful agitation. Poor Josephus! I am afraid he will be obliged to suspend for to-day the tedious narrative of his countrymen's seditions. My interest in him increases as he draws near the illustrious *era* beheld in prophetic vision, ushered in with seraphic song. . . . The Roman annals of this period have for me an amazing interest. I have them from the hand of a master. I am eagerly looking on every page for some mention of characters enshrined on the altar of Christianity. . . . My affection for you has given a new tone to my feelings and animation to my pursuits. . . . I want you to become better acquainted with my old friend Lactantius. He lived to a great age, and had the satisfaction of seeing the clouds that had so long lowered over the Christian world begin to break away. It was the last burst of the tempest of persecution that provoked his elegant defense. His style is very clear, and his standard of morality high as perfection itself. He has some faults, is often fanciful in his interpretation of Scripture language, and sometimes shows great want of candor in interpreting the moral precepts of heathen philosophy. He seems to have fallen into an error natural to the early age of the Church,—considers poverty and persecution necessary to Christian virtue. Is it an error? Do not many graces imply a state of suffering?"

MISS BRADFORD TO MISS ALLYN.

"Miss Emerson has left Boston for an uncertain time. You know how I dislike writing; yet I have already written to her. It was the condition on which I am to expect her letters; and if they are of as much benefit to me as I hope her society has been, I shall be abundantly compensated. Do not be jealous of her, my best friend. My affection for you and her are very different: there is too much of reverential respect mingled with the former to admit of that unreserved confidence which is so strong a bond of union between *us*. Can an acquaintance of a few months, where there is disparity of years and difference in pursuits, be weighed in the balance with a friendship of years, cemented by union in studies as well as sentiment?"

Her friend indorses the following letter, "This letter written when she was seventeen."

MISS BRADFORD TO MISS EMERSON.

[1810.]

"DEAR MARY,—

"I have begun Stewart. (Oh, how you have multiplied my sources of enjoyment!) By bringing into view the various systems of philosophers concerning the origin of our knowledge, he enlarges the mind, and extends the range of our ideas, while he traces to their source those torrents of error, skepticism, and infidelity that have for ages inundated this fair field of science; clearly distinguishing between proper objects of inquiry and those that must forever remain inexplicable to man in the present state of his faculties. Reasonings from induction are delightful. I have read but few works on these subjects. Oh, how I envy the scholar, the philosopher, whose business, whose profession, is science! Continually making new discoveries in this boundless region, where every object bears the impress of Divinity, Linnæus could trace with equal wonder and delight the strokes of a divine, unrivaled pencil, as Newton the omnipotent arm that first gave motion to the

planetary system. Even the humble dandelion exhibits an order and regularity of parts admirable as the harmony of spheres. Yet, as much as I am pleased with your philosophical speculations, I should not be willing to renounce for them entirely the poets of Greece and Rome. Opening Virgil the other night after I was in bed, his fine description of Æneas's descent into the lower regions held imagination entranced for hours. The sombre and terrific images that throng the gloomy portal, the turbid, sedgy stream, the supplications of unburied shades that hover around its banks, thick as autumnal leaves, the grim boatman, the converse of Æneas with the spirits of departed heroes, the expressive look and manner of his injured mistress, described in all the majesty of Virgil's style, wonderfully entertain the fancy. In pathos of sentiment he is unrivaled: he is acquainted with every avenue to the heart. His epic abounds with the most affecting pictures of filial love and heroic friendship. I have almost a mind to blot this long eulogium. I am continually introducing you to one or another of my old friends, that you do not care a fig for, who meet with so much more agreeable society of your own age. I am afraid you will never be rid of their intrusions till you absolutely command them to stay at home. Do call me a good girl for writing again so soon. Good-by.

"Yours with affection, SARAH."

"DEAR MARY,—

"I have just received your valuable letter, and would answer it while warm with gratitude for the affectionate interest it expresses in my welfare. Your caution against an undue devotion to literary pursuits is, I fear, too necessary. Perhaps not more time is allotted to them than conscience would permit for innocent amusements. But their dominion over the affections is the danger. I fear, if called to relinquish them entirely or desert some positive duty, the sacrifice would be made with reluctance. Yet, when I experience how much more easy is the transition to serious meditation from an evening spent in study than one spent in society, where vanity

may have been excited or pride flattered, I am inclined to consider them, if not directly tending to produce, at least not unfavorable to, piety. How ready we are to excuse a favorite passion! It is my constant prayer that my affections may be purified, and with advantages for improvement my sphere of usefulness may also be enlarged. My friend, I should not write thus to any one but yourself. I am almost ashamed when I see that I have as yet been the only subject. Do tell me if you think me vain or presuming.

" . . . You are the only person who ever thought me of any consequence, and I am pretty well convinced other folks are more than half right. I want you to love me, but you must do as you please about it."

MISS BRADFORD TO MISS ALLYN.

"I have been so busily engaged since mother has been at Duxbury in mending old clothes and making cambric bonnets, that I have not had time to read, write, nor scarcely think, except about my work. What will you say,—that I have improved or degenerated, if I tell you I have spent almost a fortnight in making two bonnets? I am afraid if you knew how much anxiety and fretting they have occasioned, you would be at no loss in pronouncing judgment. Be that as it may, I have acquired the fame of being quite a tasteful milliner, and, if you regard the time and pains bestowed, I think there was never any fame of the kind more justly earned."

"You don't want to know what I am doing, but I will tell you to plague you. I study now and then a little Latin. In the daytime while I sit at work Daniel reads some entertaining book to me, and in the evening when there is no company I usually study a chapter in the Greek Testament. I dare not tell you how much of my time I spend in playing with Hannah, who grows a fine little girl: you don't know how much we all love her. Do write to me soon and send me

a translation of some part of the Æneid, written handsomely on a neat piece of paper. Have you begun the History of Rome? Remark particularly the events happening about Cicero's time. It is my favorite history. I expect it will afford us a fund of conversation when we meet again.

"Dear Abba, we go through the same routine of business here,—wash Monday, iron Tuesday, etc. The description of one week would serve for all the rest in the year; no variety, except of books, of which (as is usually the case in vacation) we have abundance. Daniel comes home loaded with new ones, French and English. Among the former I find Voltaire's Age of Louis XIV., valuable both from the style in which it is written and the important events it relates. What would you say if I were to tell you I have begun five different books at once? I am afraid the little leisure I have, divided among so many objects, will not be very profitably employed. I am reading Juvenal, a Roman satirist, who is charming when he lashes those follies that are common among mankind in every age; but when he attacks those grosser ones of his own which are now 'not so much as named among us' he is often so indelicate that I am obliged to pass over a great deal. No one can read the Satires of Juvenal, or St. Paul's picture of his age in the first chapter of Romans, and not perceive how greatly Christianity has refined the tone of morality, though much of her genuine influence be diminished by the bad passions of men.

"I have undertaken to instruct the little ones this winter, and now begin to realize what has been your task for a year or two past. They hate the Latin grammar, but in geography we go on more smoothly: they are pleased to trace countries, rivers, etc., on the map, and George's eyes will sparkle when he hears any place mentioned in conversation whose situation he is acquainted with. To grammar they attach no kind of idea, and I cannot conceive that its study can be useful in any other way than forming a habit of attention. I have been reading to-day part of a charming satire where Juvenal paints glaringly the mistakes of men in their search after happiness.

The book lies before me, with the leaf turned down: I long to read it to you, it is so natural. Where do you think I am writing to you? In my own chamber, which, by the means of a little shoemaker's stove* fixed here this afternoon, is as warm as an oven. Some sweet ingredient is each day mingled in my cup. For all these blessings I cannot be grateful enough to kind friends, and to Him who has given me these friends. Good-night, says one who loves you dearly.

"SARAH BRADFORD."

"I have not read much this vacation, though French books have abounded, for I spent most of my leisure with Theocritus, an old Grecian, the father of pastoral poetry. I like many of his Idyllia better than Virgil's Bucolica. He is much more natural, and to him Virgil is indebted for many of his most beautiful ideas. There is so much of nature in the Idyllium I am now studying, a dialogue between two women on their way to some public show, that I long to recite it to you, as I do a thousand other things I meet with in the day."

"The comet is running off very fast; I shall be sorry to bid him good-by forever. I seldom go to bed without looking to see if the old serpent's head is still above the horizon."

"I am very much interested in Tacitus at present. He has a manner so pleasant of telling his stories, he is as interesting as a novelist. I am impatient for the time when you shall read him. I am sometimes almost tempted to wish I knew nothing about Latin, and had not a taste for studies that subject me to so many inconveniences; for the time I now employ

---

* A friend in Boston writes, "I find by inquiry among the old stove-makers that a 'shoemaker's stove' was well known as a cylinder of sheet iron laid horizontally, flattened on the upper side, with a door at one end and a funnel at the other."

in study I should then spend in reading books which would enable me to join in the conversation and partake of the pleasures of fashionable ladies, but now I am as careful to conceal my books and as much afraid of being detected with them as if I were committing some great crime."

So this fair, fragrant lily grew up in the grass of common daily life, pure, peaceable, wise, lovely, of good report: "if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," she was not found wanting. No desire to evade the lowliest household task which duty or affection laid upon her ever shows itself in her letters. And the same lowly, sincere acceptance of the daily order of Providence in life remains characteristic to the last.

The War of 1812–14, and other causes, brought such interruptions to her father's occupations—which were still connected with commerce, although he had left the sea about the year 1808—that it became expedient for him, in 1813, to accept the office of Warden of the State Prison in Charlestown. After some time he removed his family from Boston to that town. But Sarah's intimacy with Miss Emerson and her young nephews was not broken by this new necessity of crossing a bridge. Their communication by letters, as will have been seen, had begun early, and it was still continued whenever the friends were separated.

MISS BRADFORD TO MISS EMERSON.

"DEAR FRIEND,—

"I spent last night with your little darling.* We vied with each other in telling stories: the little budget of learning and fancy was all emptied, nor were its contents so inconsiderable as the aunt would sometimes represent them.—I have before me a rare banquet of reason and taste, if I had but leisure to enjoy it,—Butler, Tasso, Sophocles, and Euripides. You will

* It is not known which of the nephews is here referred to.

enjoy Butler's Analogy with me. I believe I told you I have Milton's minor poems. With what majesty and sublimity his old-fashioned epithets grace his style! They remind one of the rich brocades and substantial ornaments of our grandmothers, contrasted with the gauze and ribbons of modern bards. In the second book of Paradise Lost, Satan's journey through the realms of Chaos and old Night,—one knows not which most to admire, the sublimity of his thoughts, or their expressive garb of diction:

> 'Who shall tempt with wandering feet
> The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss,
> And through the palpable obscure find out
> His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight,
> Upborne with indefatigable wings,
> Over the vast abrupt.'

"Every word is an idea, and an idea it seems no other word could so forcibly express. How could Johnson talk about blank verse being unfit for English epic? Your friend E. says he has colored our theology. No wonder! Poets were the mythologists of ancient days. Inspiration was attributed as their peculiar gift, and, in their language, for poet and prophet one word sufficed.

"Why can't you be disinterested enough, after you have inhaled the fragrance of autumnal wild flowers, to press some of them for me? Taylor's Holy Dying will be just the book to entomb withering beauty. The modes of decease, too, in the vegetable world are not destitute of variety: the green brier which taints the gale while it lives, and loses when dry its offensive odor, may comment on 'the wicked cease from troubling;' the fragrance of the faded rose is a good name left behind; and the pappous tribe go off on gossamer wings of immortality. Do write, whether consistent or inconsistent with your pursuits: in the latter case I make the appeal to benevolence.

"Yours most affectionately, SARAH."

Among the letters to Miss Emerson I find one addressed to Ralph Waldo Emerson, then eleven years old,—beginning with a translation from Virgil, which she challenges him to finish:

MISS BRADFORD TO RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

1814.

"My dear young Friend,—

* * * * * * * * * * *

"You love to trifle in rhyme a little now and then: why will you not continue this versification of the fifth bucolic? You will answer two ends, or, as the old proverb goes, kill two birds with one stone,—improve in your Latin, as well as indulge a taste for poetry. Why can't you write me a letter in Latin? But Greek is your favorite language: *epistola in linguâ Græcâ* would be still better. All the honor will be on my part, to correspond with a young gentleman in Greek. Only think of how much importance I shall feel in the literary world. Tell me what most interests you in Rollin; in the wars of contending princes, under whose banner you enlist, to whose cause you ardently wish success. Write me with what stories in Virgil you are most delighted: is not that a charming one of the friendship of Nisus and Euryalus? I suppose you have a Euryalus among your companions; or don't little boys love each other as well as they did in Virgil's time? How beautifully he describes the morning! Do write to your affectionate friend, Sarah."

Thus adjured, her young friend returns in answer a fulfillment of the task assigned him, in a translation of the fifth bucolic from the nineteenth to the thirty-fifth line:

May 6, 1814.

"*Mop.* Turn now, O youth, from your long speech away;
The bower we've reached recluse from sunny ray;
The Nymphs with pomp have mourned for Daphnis dead;
The hazels witnessed, and the rivers fled.
The wretched mother clasped her lifeless child,
And gods and stars invoked with accents wild.
Daphnis! the cows are not now led to streams
Where the bright sun upon the water gleams,

Neither do herds the cooling river drink,
Nor crop the grass upon the verdant brink.
O Daphnis! both the mountains and the woods,
The Punic lions, and the raging floods,
All mourn for thee, for thee who first did hold
In chariot-reins the spotted tiger bold.
Daphnis the Bacchanalian chorus led,
He placed himself at the mad dancers' head.
'Twas Daphnis who with beauteous fingers wove
The stems of leaves he gathered from the grove.
As the great beauty of a tree is seen
From vines entwining round its pleasant green,
As vines themselves in grapes their beauty find,
As the fair bull of all the lowing kind,
As standing corn doth grace the verdant fields,
So to thy beauty every rival yields."

MISS BRADFORD TO MISS EMERSON.

"CHARLESTOWN, Nov. 9th, 1814.

"DEAR FRIEND,—

"You will have me write—what? the interesting detail of mending, sweeping, teaching? What amusement can you reasonably require at the hand of a being secluded in a back chamber, with a basket of stockings on one side, and an old musty heathen on the other? Musty! reiterates father Homer, frowning through his gilt cover. . . . Well, dear Mary, if you will have aught of me this evening, you must be content to pass it with Ariosto or Tasso, for we are inseparable. . . . Ariosto gives free rein to an imagination luxuriant, wild, brilliant as his own enchanted domes with airy touch that fancy fires; Tasso's genius chastised by correctness of taste appears in picturesque description, accurate delineation of character, various and entertaining incident. *Novelty* bestows their charm on visions of unrestrained fancy, but nature pleases always. The gondoliers of Venice, their oars beating time, are heard nightly chanting Tasso's stanzas,—rarely Ariosto's. The poet of nature is a practical metaphysician, acquainted as it were by inspiration with those combinations of passions and affections common to our race, that form all

the varieties of individual character,—skilled to touch those delicate strings of sentiment that find concordant notes in every soul. Our age, I believe, consents to place the English epic poet in the niche with Homer; Tasso dares not aspire so high, yet (though never in sublimity) in beauty of description he might dispute the palm with Milton; and even this towering genius sometimes condescends to borrow a fine simile from his Italian predecessor.

"I dispatched a letter by post this morning: this is for a private conveyance; George stands waiting with his Homer; Betsey teasing to know how the meat is to be dissected; the wind blowing books and papers in every direction; but *cacoethes scribendi*,—I keep on. 'Write, if consistent with your pursuits.' You will be obliged, when tired of paying postage and breaking seals, to explain yourself in more direct terms."

MISS BRADFORD TO MISS ALLYN.

"CHARLESTOWN, April 19th, 1815.

"DEAR ABBA,—

"I had hoped our next communication would have been oral, but, as the Fates do not seem disposed to extend my thread to Duxbury, I come again in the form of epistle. . . . How is it with Greek, Latin, and French? Have you conquered Sallust? and do you meditate an attack on Horace next? If this is your intention, you may prepare for a tight conflict, for it is something more than play, even after Tacitus has nerved the arm and exercised the skill. This last waits your command. Your friend is listening again to the Doric muse of Theocritus, and anticipating the period when we shall enjoy her harmony in company. Virgil is happier than Thomson in the picturesque of poetry: the dazzling splendor of the latter blends his imagery in indistinct confusion, while Virgil's expressive diction throws a soft shade about his

'jam summa procul villarum culmina fumant
Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ,'

and marks each object with distinctness. Theocritus excels them both in this master-art of description. Vivid conception of the grand and beautiful in nature, and a talent of discriminating selection, are the gifts of the poetic imagination. Who cannot measure a verse and conclude it with the jingle of rhyme? but to see with a poet's eye and color with a poet's pencil—*hic labor est!*"

"March 19th.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

"We have been turning over the leaves of a German grammar for the last week; have the promise of books, but can procure no dictionary; transition rather harsh from Italian, in which every word ends with a vowel, to consonant upon consonant in *schramme* and *geschwult.* One meets *in limine primo* with many words like the English, which is accounted for by the Teutonic derivation of both. Mme. de Staël says that it, the German, resembles the Greek language in its construction; which is certainly observable in the number of its declensions and the variations of its articles. Perhaps the similarity of structure may be accounted for by peculiar circumstances in the early state and progress of the two nations. Homer presents us with a picture of the primeval polity and manners of his country, numerous independent tribes, each electing its own chief, dignified in heroics with the royal title, frequently embroiled in petty contests with each other, all uniting for the purpose of public defense or retaliation. In this state they continue to make progress in arts and civilization, unconquered by any foreign power, till the memorable invasion of the Persians serves but to exercise their military talents and confirm the national spirit of freedom. Tacitus gives nearly the same account of the manners of ancient Germany, which, however, is but a general description of the early history of every nation, the natural or rather the simple form of government founded on the universally acknowledged right of parental authority. Germany seems neither to have been civil-

ized nor corrupted by its intercourse with the Roman soldiery; the regular construction of its language and the gradual refinement of its manners to have been its own work,—like those of Greece, the natural progress of society. . . . Perhaps I shall tell you when I know more of the crooked letters the analogy between the two languages is as imaginary as the attempt to account for it is fanciful. And now we come to the matter in hand, to thank you for your entertaining letter, to entreat you not to sit up too late nor rise too early, not to wet your feet or fatigue yourself through too violent exercise; in short, to take care of your health. I suppose by this time the *epigæa repens* begins to peep through the withered leaves. Do press me a bunch, as I have never examined it particularly.

"Wedn. week.—A German dictionary! We begin to think our own language has the best claim to relationship to the German: the verb is commonly the concluding word in the sentence, which will make it fine for poetry. You do not tell me where to find you in Greek. You will probably begin the Iliad after 'Minora.' I long to hear what you think of the venerable (Samian or Chian) bard. Has not Tacitus yet described anything worthy of a mark? In May I am to see your mother and yourself. Do not disappoint

"S. A. B."

"There is indeed a striking analogy between the German and Greek in the number of compounded words: abstract and general terms are composed of words expressing the simple ideas included, and thus explain themselves without definition. From this peculiarity the Greek has become the source from which every modern science has drawn its nomenclature; and indeed it must be a marked feature in every idiom which, without being indebted to foreign or ancient languages, has grown out of the necessities and improved with the taste and science of the age. We are now laboring at one of Klopstock's dramas, the subject of which is the famous destruction by the Cherusci of Varro's three legions, whose remains were afterward found in the sacred forests of the Germans by Ger-

manicus's army,—which Tacitus finely describes, I think, in his first book. . . . My mother is very sick to-day, and I have cake in the oven to take care of: so good-by.—Saturday.—George has been reciting from one of Sallust's prefaces. What a philosopher he would fain be! he has moralized us all to sleep. His motto, '*Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus*,' and his inference, of course, that it is better to be an historian than a consul. He traces with a masterly hand the causes of great revolutions and events to the secret passions of the human heart. He can draw a striking portrait—witness Jugurtha's; but how insufferably affected in style!"

TO MISS ALLYN.

"Do you read the Greek Testament? It will take many a rainy Sunday to exhaust the new ideas one may acquire by divesting one's self of the prejudices of education and the peculiar sanctity distant and superstitious time has thrown around the epistolary parts of these records of our faith; with a distinct idea of the character of their author to place ourselves at Corinth, Athens, or Jerusalem, as they really existed in the time of the apostle,—not as seen with the glass of faith through the long postern of eighteen centuries; to find full of interesting meaning, passages which appear obscure, extravagant, or contradictory to those who receive every epistle as applicable *in toto* to the Church at the present day."

The "having picked up Lowth's Isaiah" is the occasion of a lively statement of "the general identification of poet and prophet among ancient nations. It was natural," she adds, "to ascribe to supernatural influence the utterance of genius which untaught by man soared far above the common level, and the solitary taste of the bard for nature in her sublime and awful attitudes might have strengthened the persuasion.

Ζεὺς δὲ θεῶν ἀγορὴν ποιήσατο τερπικέραυνος
ἀκροτάτῃ κορυφῇ πολυδειράδος Οὐλύμποιο.

". . . What of all this? I was going to add, I know not what, about divine truth coming with superior authority from lips already, without the evidence of miracles, believed to be touched with celestial fire."

"Brilliant imagination is all Ariosto has to boast, but so wild and extravagant as rather to astonish and entertain than to interest the feelings. Sympathy seldom goes beyond the bounds of nature."

"We are expecting you daily. When you come you shall be treated to a peep at Herodotus in green and gold: '*dulcis et fusus et candidus Herodotus.*' Margaret is waiting to say her lesson. Do make haste,—May is almost past."

"I have found a French work on chemistry and natural history in five volumes, quite elementary, perfectly intelligible, and am up to the mind's elbows in carbon."

After comparing the style of Cicero with that of Tacitus, she says,—

"A nation's taste as well as literature has its rise and decline. It seems to be the fate of humanity that, arrived at the height of eminence in any attainment, it must begin to descend again ere it has time to view the goodly prospect. Happily, the heights of natural science are 'Alps on Alps.'"

"My dear Friend,—

"You have become Tacitus *ad unguem.* Excuse me if once and again I break in on your retirement, disturb your reverie, or add a provoking third to your society. What a striking feature in the delineation of Tiberius's character are those ambiguous letters to the Senate,—the arbitrary tyrant

under the specious garb of deference to pristine manners! Gothic ignorance, or Father Time's more barbarous hand, has provokingly made *bonne prise* of some dozen pages in the latter part of this Emperor's history: this gap is admirably supplied by Juvenal's tenth satire.

"By the way, I have a new Delphini edition of Juvenal, with notes explanatory to every sentence; at your service, of course. It will be hard labor, but in a diamond mine. The originality of his ideas will surprise and the fine strokes of nature will delight you. The poet of genius who can distinguish between artificial manners modified by local and occasional circumstances, and those genuine springs of feeling and principles of action which mark man's fraternity to man, writes for every age,—raises a monument to his fame '*perennius ære.*' Novelty and a splendid imagination may throw a momentary halo around forms unnatural and extravagant; but the emotion of surprise is transient, and it can never boast the charm of sympathy. Nature speaks to every heart; we view the pictures of antiquity which her pencil traces, with the traveler's delight who recognizes well-known features in a distant land: they please if common; but if genius animate them, what is the emotion!

"Your Greek was grateful as a milestone on a long journey to mark the distance gone; as to its critical merit, you are as well qualified to judge as your humble servant, who blesses her stars if she can by dint of digging arrive at the ideas without pretending to analyze the soil which covers them. Gam just enters, and calls for toast and coffee: so good-night. . . . Do you know it is almost three months since you have entered into the detail of books and business? If Procyon, who keeps a steady eye upon you, were but a looking-glass to reveal your secret doings! Do note him peeping in at your eastern window every evening between seven and eight. Daniel has attacked Thucydides and Juvenal; Martha, Italian; I distill and calcine with Fourcroi, smile with Voltaire at the superstitious follies of barbarous times, and now and then break Morpheus's head with an Italian drama, viz., Goldoni's,

which has not much to boast as to plot or incident, and is nevertheless entertaining from the nature ease, and humor of the dialogue.

"Always obliged, dear Abba, by your affectionate sympathy. I am so happy as to be able to tell you that Gam is on the recovery, has a good appetite, and appears to be free from any symptoms of disease. He is, however, extremely weak, and unable to sit up more than five minutes at a time. . . . I have had a dainty morsel in 'Eichhorn on the Apocalypse:' he considers the book as a drama, imagines a plot, lays the action in heaven, and adorns and illustrates the scenes with treasures of ingenuity and curious learning. But the hour of twilight in a dark chamber, where the only glimmerings are those that peep through certain longitudinal crevices in the window-shutters, is neither the most convenient nor inspiring for epistolizing, whatever it may be for friendly chat. No doubt you are as poetically sentimental as 'rocking winds' and 'heaven's pure expanse' can make you; while I am content if one vagrant ray of Phœbus makes its way by noon through my key-hole. In short, I have not been out of doors since the 1st November; but of this no complaint, while I converse ideally—that is, not in fancy, but in black and white—with worthies both dead and living; above all, since anxious suspense and distressing apprehension have been dispelled by returning hope."

MISS BRADFORD TO MISS EMERSON.

1816.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

"Charles's understanding and manners do his instructress much credit, but sincerely I fear the dear little boy must yet through much tribulation become initiated into the mysteries of *hic, hæc, hoc.* He has not yet formed a habit of application, if I can judge from this morning's lesson. The labor of turning over his dictionary wearied him; and, as he came for a visit of

pleasure, I had not the heart to tease him. Nothing but the responsibility of an interested instructor or the anxiety of a parent can reconcile one to the tedious labor of thoroughly perfecting a child in all the minutiæ of a language without the aid of emulation or fear, the moving springs of a public school. To the last you would be unwilling to expose a darling so early as seven; but I really think that unless Charles's time could be profitably occupied at home with the elements of some natural science, to inspire a taste for which would again require much time and affectionate assiduity, he ought to go to school. We will together make one more desperate effort for a good private one, if your ladyship shall see fit to attend to my remonstrances. Poor little fellow, he is looking at pictures beside me, little imagining I am plotting against his peace; but so it is—the bitter root must be tasted before the sweet fruits of learning can be obtained. He has behaved perfectly well, and is quite contented; but I have let the children play nearly all day.

"Yours, SARAH."

"I shall bring this myself, but I had rather write, than talk, with the air of a counsellor."

"Your present shall purchase a Pindar,* not a pin-cushion. I have long wanted him to fill a niche on my shelf of classics, but not as a token to remember a friend who has had more power and influence over me than any other being who ever trod this earth or breathed this vital air. You have sometimes been so unjust as to impute it to pride that I have so seldom protested how much I loved you, while the true cause was the incredulous smile with which the expressions of affection were repulsed."

* This "Pindar"—a small Oxford edition of 1808, with the inscription "Sarah A. Bradford from her friend M. Emerson"—is still in the possession of Mrs. Ripley's family. She was fond of telling an amusing story of her search for it. "Pindar?" the booksellers would say, one after another; "Pindar? you mean Peter Pindar, I suppose?"

"DEAR MARY,—

"The severity of your remarks drew a few tears and shed a temporary gloom over meditation. But you will accuse me of pride again when I tell you an emotion succeeded somewhat like resignation for the loss of earthly friendship at the recollection of being amenable alone to a higher tribunal,—though just and holy yet infinitely merciful, where an unguarded expression will not condemn. Have I led you to believe I consider myself faultless? I am daily conscious of much offense in thought, word, and deed, but I have not thought it necessary to pain or disgust you by the recital of defects. I live only on the hope of amending. Dearest friend, remember that language of reproof much less harsh would find its way to the heart and conscience of your affectionate

"SARAH A. B."

"June 12th, 1817.

"MY DEAR MARY,—

"I am on the eve of engaging myself to your brother. Your family have probably no idea what trouble they may be entailing on themselves. I make no promises of good behavior, but, knowing my tastes and habits, they must take the consequences upon themselves. You will be amused if a long epistle should reach you, written a week since and lost in the street on its way to Boston. Said letter contained an answer to your question, and, as the chance is that it will be put in the office, I will not trouble you with a duplicate.

"Yours most affectionately,

"SARAH."

CHAPTER II.

In 1818 Miss Bradford was married to the Rev. Samuel Ripley, and for the next twenty-eight years her home was in the parsonage at Waltham. In coming there she entered at once into the labors of a house where fourteen boys were kept at a boarding-school, and these labors continued during all her life there: she was the sole matron of the establishment. Here all her children were born and all but the two youngest grew up; and here one daughter was married.

The first letters in my possession from her Waltham home are addressed to her brother Daniel, who had gone to seek his fortune in Kentucky. They begin in 1819, when her eldest daughter was a few weeks old, and come to an end in 1821. They abound, of course, in details of neighborhood and family affairs; but, like "the orange tree, that busy plant," even the leaves share the aroma of the flower and fruit, and the tree is never without blossoms,—if in this ripening season they must needs be fewer.

MRS. RIPLEY TO DANIEL BRADFORD.

[1819.]

"Dear Brother,—

"The greatest difficulty in an undertaking is surmounted when you have begun, for then the desire to finish, which Lord Kames, who is over-fond of multiplying original principles, makes one of our nature, comes in to aid other reasons for doing the business. So I always put another letter on the stocks when I have finished and folded one.

"*Waltham, Oct. 6th,* 1819.—The baby daily receives additions to her wardrobe, with notes which require all one's ingenuity for variety to answer. Miss L. is making an India muslin dress trimmed with lace, which she intended for its christening dress; but I prefer its making its debut before the parish in plain cambric. We decided the matter amicably,

however, by putting it on the score of pride. The baby is crying for me. Good-evening."

After much lively social comment, she continues, "Nov. 13. —I have just finished Electra; the last scene, the murder of Clytemnestra, is very great. The Greek dramatists were in the right to have this business out of sight. Clytemnestra's voice in broken sentences adds much to the horror of the scene. Her body is brought out covered, and Ægisthus thinks it is Orestes till he lifts the veil and discovers. Do you recollect Electra's lamentation when she receives the news of the death of Orestes? I think this is the best of Sophocles' plays that I have read yet. The first part of Antigone is fine, but it grows stupid toward the last. Æmon proses. The chorus is fine.

"Abba is still with us; we enjoy ourselves right well. We have been going over the old ground of the ideal and common-sense philosophy. We quarrel with Stewart's labored periods and critical, desultory style, and think him indebted to Reid for ideas not a few.

"On Thursday the baby made her debut in the city; was visited and complimented by all her relations; we left her in state at Aunt Polly's, dressed in Miss Lowell's cap and Ann Dunkin's robe, and set out ourselves on the very interesting business of doing up our calls for the winter. . . .

"When facts drop from my pen like so many peas from a pod, I console myself by calling to mind a remark of Gam's, that George's epistolary list of insulated events was the most entertaining communication he received during his absence."

"Jan. 17th, 1820, 11 P.M.

"Walker* came up on Saturday and stayed till this morning, being Monday. He gave us two masterly discourses; he is a powerful man, a metaphysician; studies mankind in books

---

* Rev. James Walker, of Charlestown, afterwards President of Harvard College.

of general philosophy, and by the application of general principles to the multitude of facts which present themselves from observation and experiment. You will smile at me for talking about James Walker in this style, but he really does grow astonishingly. Did you ever read any of Hartley's works? He is the first man I ever talked with who regarded Hartley as the prince of metaphysicians.

"The fear that our communication, which has been one of the pleasantest circumstances in my life, might be drawing to a close, has induced me to commence with such zeal the business of epistle-making. I'm afraid you will laugh at me for being sentimental; but the doctor* has been singing the 'Ruins,' and I have wanted to-day to show you some passages in Ajax."

"March 31st, 1820.

"We have just obtained Ivanhoe; happier he who writes than he who dares enunciate the Saxon's name, which, like Giaour and Goethe of old, sticks between one's teeth till one is assured how the present company are minded.

"I suppose you have devoured Ivanhoe ere this. What variety of horrors in Front-de-Bœuf's castle, from Isaac in the dungeon to Ulrica on the flaming battlement! Front-de-Bœuf's death is masterly; the union of heroism in humility in Rebecca's character is admirable: Ivanhoe kills his giant, and that is all; the scene in the hermitage of the clerk of Copmanhurst is one of the most amusing. The *beau-monde* are loudest in their admiration of the tournament; but that as well as various encounters in the book are no novelties to those who have read Ariosto."

"June, 1820.

"We are busily engaged in preparing for commencement. One poor wight is studying for dear life, and trembling in his shoes, looking forward to the day that shall fix his destiny for four years or five; while if your old friend S. should fail, it

---

* Dr. Samuel L. Dana.

will not be from any distrust in his own qualifications. The two boys are the very antipodes to each other: one, in his efforts to express the force of every particle, becomes barbarous, and the other in his ambition to be elegant, sometimes gives any sense rather than that of the author. Oh, the misery of correcting Latin in which there is no indictable mistake and yet all is wrong *ab initio!*

"*August*, 1820.—It is delightful weather with us: plenty of ripe melons remind us of old times. I have made no accession to my stock of botanical science this summer; the wild flowers enjoy their retreats unmolested. Next week comes commencement. The last numbers of the Edinburgh and Quarterly and various other new publications lie on the table almost unopened. We are so much engaged in gossiping and drilling boys for college that we find but little time for reading. Mr. Francis supplies me with German theology. The last author I looked at, Gesenius, adduces some very weighty reasons for believing that the five books ascribed to Moses were composed as late as the golden age of Hebrew literature, which he places in the reign of David and his successor. Who shall decide when doctors disagree? I wish I could read Hebrew and its sister dialects."

"WALTHAM, October 5th, 1820.

"DEAR BROTHER,—

"You allude to the popular language of the New Testament: had our Lord delivered discourses on abstract virtue, had he talked of the Creator of the universe being its moral governor, that his government was administered by general laws, that in its constitution virtue and happiness, vice and misery, were inseparably and eternally connected, that every step in the one was a step toward felicity, and in the other toward degradation and suffering, that consequences were connected with actions exactly proportioned to their merit or demerit, his words would have fallen like empty sounds upon the ears of a morally debased, superstitious, and ignorant multitude, who could be impressed only through the medium of the

passions, and who had no idea of any suffering but physical suffering. In all ages and states of society a revelation or system of religion intended equally for the philosopher and the peasant must admit the greatest latitude of interpretation in its phraseology. The peasant needs its guidance and consolations most; it seems but fair, therefore, that its language should be suited to his comprehension: from the apologue and the allegory the philosopher will easily infer the general truth or moral. As to the passage in Isaiah, critics say '*a* mighty God, *a* father of the age' is the most correct translation of the original; and in the Hebrew idiom these are by no means extravagant expressions as applied to distinguished personages. The question at issue between trinitarians and their opponents involves such a multitude of others, metaphysical, ethical, historical, philological, and critical, that it seems to be no easy day's work to determine it. One of the principal reasons why the war is protracted without any progress toward a conclusion appears to me to be that the disputants are continually on the same old ground, adducing and explaining Scripture passages, while the most important point, the nature of inspiration, and the degree of it attending the sacred records, is almost entirely kept out of sight.—Well, I think I have given you theology enough: so I will take up my work. But first I will mention a curious appearance on a bough of black alder which the boys brought in just now: it looks verily like white down, and seems to be a collection of singular insects of different sizes, some with wings and some without. Dr. Dana calls them a species of aphis, a genus which naturalists consider a sort of anomaly. The sweet exudation on plants called honeydew is supposed to be produced by them. I intend to look out for them next summer. I have been reading Ricardo on Political Economy, a sensible work on that most complicated of all sciences. He dissents from Adam Smith in some important points on the subject of rent, wages, and profit; and if his opinions are correct, which he makes out very much to the satisfaction of a reader who is blessed with no greater stock of general or particular knowl-

edge in this science than myself, he has detected some errors of considerable importance in their practical influence on the subject of taxation and other questions in legislation.

"I have adopted your advice of making George write Latin every day; and his pieces are so excessively Latin that an old Roman would be puzzled to make it out. I know no better way of correcting the faults than making him write from a translation of Cicero and then compare with the original. I have been traveling slowly through Sophocles ever since you left us; began his last, Philoctetes, to-day, with the aid of a Hedericus which Mr. R. brought home last Thursday. I think the Trachiniæ is the poorest of his dramas.—I have just looked out to admire the unclouded brightness of an October moon, and return to bid you good-night. . . .

"Ajax is a good play: there is one scene between him and his wife and child very great. One of the chief difficulties in the choruses is, words you cannot find in the dictionary, and the translations take such license in rendering they afford you very little help.

"Gam was commending Wells's philosophical essays to me; one of them a solution of the problem why having two eyes we see objects single. One set of philosophers refers it to the judgment of the mind, the perception of touch correcting those of sight. He proves mathematically that it must be so and cannot be otherwise.

"There is a good article in the N. A. Review on Tudor's book, by Everett. It is curious to remark the change that has taken place in sentiments and opinions since a few years. What would have been stigmatized some half-dozen years ago as rank democracy is now regarded but as the honest expression of American feeling, and a just estimation of the superior privileges of our own free and rising republic."

"WALTHAM, January 12th, 1821.

"DEAR BROTHER,—

"After many weeks of anxious expectation, to our great joy we received this evening yours from Greenville, a place not

considerable enough to occupy a point on a map half a yard square, the largest we could find in the house. After reading over each other's shoulders,—we had hurried through the letter with breathless speed,—to our great disappointment we were referred for exact particulars to father, who was here yesterday and may not be here again this fortnight.—*Omnia mutantur* is my text, and the subject is so full I scarce know what particulars to select. If you could transport yourself to Waltham, you would perchance find yourself in a nursery surrounded with cribs, cradles, guards, etc., your path impeded with dolls and playthings, the joint property of three little girls: your second niece made her entrée some seven weeks since; the third is little Sarah E. You have probably heard that a malignant fever has swept off her whole family except the three boys and this baby: she was named for me, and we have adopted her. The family is broken up. The two youngest boys are at Duxbury. The babies make so great demands on my time and attention that I have more excuse than ever for scraps and dry detail. Good-night: you will hear from me again when they are all safe in bed to-morrow evening. January 18th.—Since I wrote the above, my baby has been dangerously ill, and is not yet well enough to be out of my arms: so I have left the remainder of the paper to be filled by the younger ones."

"WALTHAM, February 2d, 1821.

"DEAR BROTHER,—

"With Cæsar's Commentaries at hand I might perhaps reply to your first question. I will answer the second after the Yankee fashion, by suggesting other queries. And, first, is there not good reason to believe that the cruel superstition of Druidism was familiar to the islanders before the time when you suppose it to have been introduced by Hengist and Horsa? It appears from Tacitus Ann. lib. xiv. 30, that the soldiers of Suetonius were so terrified by its horrid rites at their landing on the island Mona, "*ut quasi hærentibus mem-*

bris, immobile corpus vulneribus præberent." For the second query, as it is an aphorism in ethics that we always hate most bitterly those from whom we differ least, is it not equally true that the hatred and ambitious rivalship of petty princes has always been superior to the dread of the ambition of a foreign power? Did not the mistress of the world call in the Goths to decide the contest between her political factions? If I mistake not, the Vandals got footing in Africa by the same means; and I dare say the historical treasures of your memory have many illustrations of the same general position. I want to see you, to rub up my history and chronology: facts in my head which cannot be generalized are like so many beads; if the string once be broken they are all in a loose heap. I am reading Malthus on Population. You do not like works on political economy, but I promise you,—from his perspicuous and convincing general reasoning, and copious induction of interesting facts and illustrations, you will find him as entertaining as any novel, Scott's not excepted. I suppose you will retort upon me, '*Chacun à son gout.*' At any rate, you have no dislike to a good piece of reasoning on any subject."

"May 5th, 1821.

"Last week father and I took a trip to Duxbury: we spent a day going the rounds, and took tea at Mr. Partridge's; in his small parlor was collected more good sense and soul than would save all Waltham,—scilicet, Mr. Partridge, Dr. Allyn, Mr. Frazier, Uncle Gershom, and father. It seemed indeed like liberty to roam at large once more over barren hills and heaths, where there is no need of looking around you at every turn lest you should be trespassing on somebody's ploughed field or meadow-land. Scenes associated with the delightful recollections of youth charm the more, the more they differ from one's present situation: the soldier, the mariner, and the statesman, when in after-life they visit their native spot, the pond where they first put to sea their little bark, the hill they first climbed to behold the rising sun, enjoy more than the

ploughman, who was born and will be buried at its foot, ever dreamed of.

"Professor Stuart has been publishing some essays upon the study of the Oriental languages, translated from the German: he is very desirous of exciting a taste for the study of these languages at Andover. His enthusiasm discovered in the notes is very amusing: you feel on reading them as if everybody must be an ignoramus who is not versed in the crooked letters of the East. He would make you believe that the Arabic, for its copiousness and variety of inflexions and the treasures of literature to which it is a key, is infinitely more deserving the attention of the scholar than the Greek. I doubt whether the institution in future time will not bear away the palm before Cambridge in biblical criticism. They make nothing but theologians at Andover, but they make lawyers and doctors too at Cambridge. I have added this spring to the blank leaves of Bigelow a low species of juniper.

"I am reading a German chemistry, in which, instead of the convenient nomenclature derived from the Greek, one is obliged to contend with barbarous German compounds, *salz-sauer* for muriatic acid, *sauer-stoff* for oxygen, and *wasser-stoff* for hydrogen. The German language must be an interesting subject in philology: it seems to be the only modern one which has arrived at such a point of refinement as to be the vehicle of science,—a natural growth without having been graffed from a foreign stock.

"I believe I shall exceed my term of four weeks this time; but I find very little leisure during the day, and you know how we gossip away summer evenings at Waltham."

"June 30th, 1821.

"You complain in your last of long silence; and I fear the complaint will be reiterated. Our family is so numerous that I find no time to write by daylight, and it is the fashion in Waltham to spend the summer evenings basking in the moon-beams. . . .

"I find some time to read yet, but little to think. Pindar, with your pencil-marks, lies on the table where I am writing. I wish there were more of them, though I cannot always decide whether they denote beauties or difficulties. I have opened at the ὀγρὸν νῶτον αἴωρεῖ: it is certainly beautiful, but the English bard does not fall far short of it, 'with ruffled plumes and flagging wing,' etc. I know not what I would not give for one of our old discussions; yet we should not enjoy it in so much peace as we used to do, for one must have the voice of a Stentor to be heard above the clamor the little trio make, whether in mirth, in sorrow, or in anger.

"*July 5th.*—Yesterday being the 4th of July, and our boys being dispersed in various directions, we proceeded to Boston to do up various ceremonious visits. We went into town over the mill-dam, an immense work, from which the posterity of the speculators will probably reap some advantage. It lands you in Beacon Street, the court end of the town, instead of dirty and retired lanes. The day was cool and uncommonly fine for the celebration. Charles Loring gave a sensible oration, and Mr. —— performed a performance (why not, as well as run a race?), miscalled a prayer, which did violence to the good taste and religious feeling of his audience: it was perfect histrionism, an appeal to the Deity in behalf of persecuted debtors, who were denied the privilege of joining in the festivities of the day.

"Another Saturday night finds my page unfinished; it is twelve o'clock, and I have just made the last preparation for the Sabbath, that I, as well as my four-footed brethren, may enjoy comparative leisure for one day at least,—if it can be called leisure to rise at half-past six, wash three babies before breakfast, look after the tidiness of fifteen boys, and walk half a mile to meeting under a burning sun.

"We were amused in looking over Mather's Magnalia to find the words of one Dr. Arrowsmith, to this effect: '*Faxit Deus Optimus, Maximus, tenacem adeo veritatis hanc Academiam (scil. Almam Matrem) ut deinceps in Angliâ lupum, in*

Hibernia bufonem invenire facilius sit, quam aut Socinianum aut Arminianum in Cantabrigiâ.' The reckless winds, alas! must have dispersed in empty air the pious wishes of the godly man.

"I have been reading old Izaak Walton's Complete Angler, one of the most calm and placid books I ever looked into."

MRS. RIPLEY TO MISS ALLYN.

"WALTHAM, New Year's Eve, 1822.

"MY DEAR ABBA,—

"My husband and Margaret have gone to a party, and I have been amusing myself with the senseless, superstitious dreams of the Jewish Talmudists about the advent of the Messiah, resurrection, etc., and, having fairly nodded, I was awaked by the idea of yourself flitting before the fancy: so I will e'en throw by the drowsy book and wish you a happy new year; and never, surely, did one open with brighter auspices for you. We sympathize in the 'predisposition to low spirits' of which you speak, and of which we can give scarce a better account than the modern sons of Esculapius who so often use the term. Whatever may be the cause of said low spirits, one thing is certain as to their removal, they vanish at the shadow of a real evil. Elizabeth has been quite unwell for two or three days, and the bare thought that death may have set his eye upon her would in a trice exorcise a legion of demons that might have possessed the imagination.

"*Jan. 8th.*—I am again alone, if it can be called alone with half a score of boys and three babies; the babies have already yielded to the influence of the dull god who 'on the high and giddy mast seals up the ship-boy's eyes and rocks his brains in cradle of the rude imperious surge,' and I have been balancing between Ned Search* and yourself, but the later acquaintance has kicked the beam: so now enlarge the circle of your fireside and make room for a visitor. You need not

* See Tucker's "Light of Nature."

polish up the Lares, sweep the hearth, adjust the ruffle: it is a visitor who asks nought but the flattery of a friendly shake and brightened eye. Oh that there were no other intercourse than that of perfect confidence! Sophia sent me word to-day when you were to be married; I put on an air of incredulity, which mightily amused Martha, that I should appear so jealous lest any one should know more of your arcana than myself. I shall not see Mr. Francis again before you see him.

"Have you read Valerius? It gives you a picturesque view of the great city, and a lively one of Roman manners; but I think there are few fine touches in character: some appear to me strained, and others tame. I have not finished it, however. Read Juvenal's fourteenth satire. I just went to the table to see what was the number of the one I was reading last evening, and it produced such a burst of ridicule that I should be obliged to have recourse to the Roman satirist to study out an epistle, that I dare not make an extract. There is such an agreeable buzz on the other side of the room that my mind is abstracted from my fingers, and I must bid you good-evening and bear my part. So we shall not see you at Martha's wedding?

"Your most affectionate friend, S. A. R."

In 1822 Mrs. Ripley's sister Martha was married to Dr. Josiah Bartlett, of Concord, Massachusetts,—ten miles from Waltham. Dr. Bartlett still lives in that town, respected and beloved by all. Her friend Miss Allyn in the same year was married to the Rev. Convers Francis, then minister of Watertown, a town adjoining Waltham, and afterwards a professor in the divinity school of Harvard University. Mr. Francis, an eminent scholar, took equal delight with his wife in the society of her friend, and their names recur often in the record of visitors who were always welcome.

It is greatly to be regretted that Mrs. Ripley's letters furnish so slight material for any record of her life during the

greater part of her residence at Waltham. For twenty years after the date of her latest letters to her brother Daniel there are but few of which I have any knowledge. This period of her life was full of arduous labors in the rearing of her family, the care of her household, and the teaching of pupils in her husband's school, or private pupils of her own, both boys and girls. During these years two sons and four daughters succeeded the "little trio" in the nursery, while those elder children grew up to share, each according to her gifts, the cares and labors and friendships of the busy house. One of the younger daughters, born in 1822, died very young. A letter dated in 1835, from a friend who had passed a night at the Waltham parsonage, says, "The children in this house,—what a charm there is in their naturalness! Mary is a sort of household fairy; a temper hers and a wit that raise and make light the daily bread of housewifery. Elizabeth walks aloof, pleased with still hours and books. Gore lives in an ideal world, and very comic in the boy is the occasional crazed look with which he suddenly re-enters the actual upon compulsion. The rest time must marshal." And again he says, "Sitting down with Mrs. Ripley,—'leaped the live thought,' and two noble hours of genuine conversation had we, quite alone. Never did I love her so well, for never did I see her so nearly. It is good to find the contrarieties of fortune fused, as it were, by the genius of the individual,—the '*Deus in nobis*' asserted and returned to continually."

Mrs. Ripley was little of a traveler. She went once with her husband to Waterford, in Maine, where her friend Miss Mary Emerson lived, and once, for her health, to Burlington, in Vermont. It was probably on occasion of this last journey that she went as far as the city of New York, where she saw La Fayette. The journey, therefore, must have been in 1824 or 1825.

The transcriber of these letters first saw Mrs. Ripley in 1834, when she was about forty years old; but I had heard of her all through my youth, as a lady who united all household and motherly virtues to very uncommon learning.

Looking back to my visits at the Waltham house, I recall with pleasure that pure atmosphere of intelligence and sincerity, where the flowers of thought opened, and the circle of friends brought their best to a mind so quick to appreciate and so eager to learn,—to a heart so ready to sympathize with any genuine experience.

The house was pleasant and well ordered. With entire simplicity in the household details, no guest ever missed any comfort or refinement; while at times of unusual festivity, as the wedding of a daughter, or a party given by the young people, it was the delight of their wealthier neighbors to send graceful and abundant offerings of rare fruits and flowers to decorate the occasion. The mother's dress was as simple as possible, in so far as her own hand was concerned in the arrangement of it; and one might well be ashamed of the anxieties of the toilet who saw how distinguished and attractive, in the absence of all that belonged to changing fashion, was the nobility of form and radiance of expression which made ornament superfluous.

Her scholars and children have pleasant pictures of her, sitting in summer under the shade of trees near the house,—the boys, with their books, about her, reciting in the open air. Her hands were often busy with some household task while the Virgil or Homer was set up open before her: "she did not," says one of her scholars, "keep her eyes upon the book; she seemed to know it by heart, and always set us right, or asked us questions, or pointed out her favorite passages with enthusiasm, without interrupting the sewing, or the shelling of peas;" and he adds, "she was always sweet and serene."

I remember going with Mrs. Ripley and Mr. and Mrs. Emerson from Concord to Cambridge, to meet some distinguished foreigners at a party where many eminent persons were present. I had never before seen her in society except in her own house or in family meetings surrounded by intimate friends. I was struck by the marked and joyful attention shown her, as one person after another eagerly recognized her presence; and also with her own animated and responsive

enjoyment. It seemed to me that to old and young the meeting with Mrs. Ripley was the crown of the occasion. I remember thinking, too, that no one was so lovely, or, with whatever aid of wealth or fashion, so becomingly dressed, as she, in her plain black robe, and the simple lace cap which marked in delicate outline her beautiful silver hair and noble face.

There is hardly any satisfactory portrait of Mrs. Ripley. Her family have a picture by Alexander, taken when she was about thirty years old, which is liked by some persons who knew her then. Cheney took a crayon likeness of her in the year 1845, but he was dissatisfied with it and refused to allow it to go out. It is, however, still in existence. Another small portrait, in oil, is in possession of the family, which was painted in 1857. It is, in most respects, a good likeness. There are also several photographs taken within a few years of her death; but they would give to a stranger small means of forming any accurate impression of the original.

A lady who was one of the most dear and valued friends of Mrs. Ripley during her life in Waltham writes,—

"My most intimate associations with Mrs. Ripley are with her Waltham life,—associations with the most gifted woman, morally and intellectually, it has ever been my happiness to enjoy. But they were of so intimate and private a nature that it seems almost a breach of trust to speak of them openly. All of her was seen through a veil of modesty such as I have never seen in any other. We would not say that she was unselfish; she never thought of self; it was real unconsciousness; goodness and kindness were so natural to her that she seemed only to breathe it. I do not think I was capable of estimating her intellectual power or her attainments; but when I saw her in communion with persons of superior intellect I was quite aware of her gifts. She would say to me—I always thought, to comfort me,—'One ounce of good feeling is worth all the learning in the world.'

"But to see her in her daily life was an education. She accomplished more than any other, but it was the subtle influ-

ence of her sweet, loving, unconscious nature that gave her the place in our hearts and lives. I know I owe her more than I can ever express. In all the annoyances of an overtaxed life I never saw her temper touched. She did not know resentment; she seemed always living in a sphere far above us all, yet in perfect sympathy. Go to her, and, at the name of some wild flower found in a walk, every care was forgotten, —the occasion was entirely yours. The next moment she was attending to family matters, or, in summer, was under the trees surrounded by a bevy of boys, fitting them for college,—boys who were full of the spirit of boyhood, but who never forgot what they owed to her; and when she found them in danger of incurring censure, a loving word of caution or suggestion would be spoken, or perhaps quietly conveyed into a mended pocket.

"You will perceive how unworthy of the public eye are all these recollections of her. I give them to you as they rise before me. I have not spoken of her great social attraction. Nearly all have passed away that could testify to that, but none of those who are still alive can forget it. She was the centre and soul of a small circle who could appreciate and enjoy. Never shall we look upon her like again."

I may properly find a place here for the following sketch, which has been kindly sent me by another highly valued friend of Mrs. Ripley, the Rev. Dr. Hedge. I give it with the heading which he himself affixed.

"A REMINISCENCE OF MRS. SARAH RIPLEY.

"BY F. H. HEDGE.

"The first impression she made on me and on all who came near her was one of rich promise, which awakened the desire of a nearer acquaintance. A wonderful attraction she was, independently of her rare acquirements, which might draw the scholar to seek the converse of so learned a woman,—an attraction proceeding from no personal charms, but due to the astonishing vivacity, the *all-aliveness*, of her presence, which

made it impossible to imagine her otherwise than wide awake and active in word or work.

"A figure somewhat exceeding in height the average stature of woman, motions quick and angular without being exactly awkward, a face not physically fair nor yet plain, but radiant with intellectual and moral beauty, a constant play of expression, eyes charged with intelligence, quick glancing from speaker to speaker as the cup of social converse went round,—such is the image she has left in my memory.

"The charm of her society to me was her perfect naturalness, the utter unconsciousness of any special claim to attention based on her superior learning, which was never intruded, and only came to light when some student or savant wished to compare notes with her or she with him. Otherwise, the woman entirely absorbed and concealed the scholar. It was the woman, not the scholar, that attracted, that edified, and, —joined with the generous hospitality and manly qualities of her husband,—made their house at Waltham so delightful a place to visit for all who were privileged to be their guests.

"In that house, between the years 1825 and 1840, I was a frequent visitor, and had abundant opportunity of seeing Mrs. Ripley in her domestic character, as mother and housewife, as well as of listening to her converse with literary men. I wondered at her indefatigable industry. With a large family and scholars at board, with pupils whom she fitted for college, or instructed as 'suspended' students in their college studies, with imperfect health, suffering through life from severe headaches, she performed an amount of work which might have taxed the combined strength of a professional school-teacher and two ordinary women,—and yet had always time to spare for her guests, and never, unless prevented by sickness, refused to see her numerous visitors.

"It would be difficult to say to what branch of knowledge or what class of studies she most inclined. In science and in languages she was equally at home. Greek she especially delighted to read and to teach; but in her latter days botany, I think, was her favorite pursuit.

"Some of her friends have expressed a regret that she was not a writer and has left behind no published work to give proof of her powers. It was quite in keeping with her character that she did not rush into print and call the world to witness her intellectual attainments. It did not seem to her that she had anything to communicate which was not known to the learned, and which the studious might not find already in print. But in the hearts of those who knew her she wrote a book whose substance they will remember as long as they remember anything, and whose contents are a commentary on the text,—

'A perfect woman nobly planned.'"

At Waltham the cares of the parish and the rule of the school occupied the busy days of her husband, who writes from time to time to his sister "out of the thick of the fight;" and a word or two from these letters may be given here as illustrative of the place the wife held in house and heart. The letter which follows begins with a few lines from Mrs. Ripley herself:

MRS. RIPLEY TO MISS EMERSON.

"Feb. 8th, 1828.

"DEAR MARY,—

"We have another addition to the family, of four pounds and a half, which has been struggling for existence for a fortnight, and it appears that the vital power is near gaining the victory over the tendency to decomposition. It is, in truth, a respectable little girl with very proper eyes, nose and mouth, not to mention the organ of mind, all comprised in a compass not larger than a middling-sized apple. My husband has to do double duty while custom confines me to the great chair. I generally improve these weeks to rub up the intellectual and clothe the outer man; but anxiety for the life of that before-mentioned speck of mortality has hurried

away most of the two last. Do write;—a letter of congratulation will be expected, of course."

REV. SAMUEL RIPLEY TO MISS EMERSON.

"Yes, my dear sister," adds the husband, "do write a letter of congratulation; not so much on account of the 'aforementioned speck of mortality,' which, by the way, is well worth a few thoughts and words, seeing it is a part of *her*, who is above all praise. But, if you do condescend to write in the congratulatory style, let it be that Providence has given me such a wife as no other man has, or ever had, a woman *sui generis*, the glory of her sex. But I must not write all I feel, even to you who know the subject of my praise. If Sarah had thought I would write thus, she would not have bid me fill up her paper; but sometimes I take the liberty of doing what I please, albeit usually under pretty good management. Wife is uncommonly well: as for her outer man I cannot say much; her dress is not very comely, for you know she never paid much attention to appearance, and her hair is gray, but the fire of her eye is not diminished, and the inner man grows brighter and purer and soars higher daily."

"Nov. 1836.

"Sarah was so much pleased with her part of your letter that she wished to answer it at once, but she was fatigued, and I persuaded her not. She is quite well, but soon gets tired with work, of which she has more than ever to do, as we have neither cook nor chambermaid,—one being sick, the other discharged for bad conduct. Wife has made the bread for our *small* family twice, and excellent bread it was. Mary is all in all,—never her equal in housewifery. Her mother once said, 'I never open my eyes in the morning without thanking God for Mary Ripley.'"

1837.

"My dear sister,—Yesterday was my birthday, and what has become of fifty-four years I know not. . . . I have much to be thankful for, many in whom to rejoice, and one, the richest and choicest blessing that God ever gave to man, to aid and bless and sustain me,—a pure, noble, exalted being, whose light gladdens and cheers and at the same time guides all about her. But I need not tell you of one whom you know so well."

1839.

"Wife is very well this winter, but has much to do with boys and men, in the way of recitations, etc. We all have to work hard. Lizzy says she has no time to read, and Mary, that she has no dancing or riding. But they enjoy themselves, and make all around them cheerful and glad."

1840.

"Sarah is now reading Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologicus*. She lives in the society of Plato and others of the same school, and her spirituality raises her above all the poor mortals around her."

"March, 1841.

"Sarah is very well, and so high in the spiritual world that nothing disturbs her serenity. She looks with perfect calmness upon everything around her, and is the sun that moves and warms and animates all within her sphere, which is not very narrow."

I return again to the letters of Mrs. Ripley, going back to a date some years earlier than those of her husband last given.

MRS. RIPLEY TO MISS EMERSON.

"DEAR MARY,—

"I believe you do not know me: I would not weaken the faith of the poorest, the most contemptible, the most hateful

fanatic that bears with me a common nature. God forbid that I should be the fiend in the paradise of a soul so pure, so elevated, so spiritual, as Waldo's!* I shall weep with him in silence, sit humbly at his feet if so I may catch a spark of the holy inspiration that glows within his bosom. Have I no admiration for the pure, the beautiful, the good? Has the pride of intellect raised its altar in my soul, and sent forth into the highway for its worshipers? Are my ears closed to the music of heaven? No, you cannot believe that it is the mist of earthly passions which dims my spiritual vision. There are moments when I would exchange minds with the humblest being that calls for his Father and has never doubted. Without faith, creation is a blank, its wonders and its glories a cipher without a key, and I will not say man, but thinking, feeling man, is of all beings most miserable. Humanity, if nothing else, would keep me on the lookout to avoid making shipwreck of ——'s faith, or that of any other of the young ones. *You* are fixed on a rock, and I talk with you to find its basis.

"Yours through existence, finite or infinite,

"S. A. R."

"WALTHAM, Sept. 4th, 1833.

"DEAR MARY,—

"I came home from Concord last night with an ague and a troublesome blister; but when Mr. R. told me there was a letter from you I darted forward for it, and the privileges of an invalid have given me time to respond to it. Since you rest your claim on feeling, it will soon be acknowledged. On that altar I sacrifice my vanity, and sit down to give you a dry detail of facts. The journal of one day would serve for all: the morning spent in hearing recitations, the afternoon in the labors of the needle or the horrors of digestion,—in the evening the old machine refuses any farther service, unless it be to take a part in the village gossip. When you ask for a letter, you expect communion with a soul penetrated with reverence

---

* R. W. Emerson.

for the true in itself, warmed through and glowing with admiration for the beautiful and good. These, alas! are the visions of the lake and mountain, not of the school-room and parlor. . . . I too was disappointed in Sir James.* The only question to me of philosophical interest in ethics is whether the moral element be original or acquired: he has done little to settle that question, though it is evident to which side he leans. Could he possibly have persuaded himself or have supposed he could persuade any one else that he had lifted by so much as the weight of a finger the stumbling-stone of necessity? The only able advocates for the liberty side are those who, like the Germans, boldly assume it on the evidence of pure reason. To some parts of the book my heart warms. He deserves a crown of gold for the justice he does to the good David† and the minds of his stamp. The metaphysics of the heart and head are equally unsatisfying: the soul of the universe is the only conception which satisfies my imagination; but what have the conceptions of a finite mind to do with the essence of the infinite? I would give a great deal to see you for a little while; but a visit from you is like a bewitching romance which leaves the reader a dreaming and unfits him for the humdrum cares and labors of real life. If I might only see you when what the writer of 'Characteristics' calls the 'disease of thought' comes on!

"We have put Elizabeth into a class with two boys who are fitting for college next commencement, and she keeps up with them very well. In a year or two she will be able to assist her father. We have lately had a delightful visit of two days from Waldo. We feel about him as you no doubt do. While we regard him still more than ever as the apostle of the eternal reason, we do not like to hear the crows, as Pindar says, caw at the bird of Jove; nevertheless he has some stout advocates. A lady was mourning the other day to Mr. Francis about Mr. Emerson's insanity. 'Madam, I wish I were half as sane,' he answered, with warm indignation."

---

* Sir James Mackintosh's Progress of Ethical Philosophy.

† David Hume.

CHAPTER III.

In 1840 the Rev. George F. Simmons was settled over the parish in Waltham as colleague to Mr. Ripley.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Ripley became warmly attached to Mr. Simmons, and when, after two years, he resigned his post in Waltham and went to Europe for two years or more of study, their whole hearts followed him with love and longing for his return. The unreserved intercourse of friendship was kept up by letters, and a selection from these gives material for this chapter.

The "mother" so often spoken of in these letters, and "Charles," are the mother and young brother of Mr. Simmons,—then residing in Boston. Between them and the Ripley family a friendship had already grown up, which was never interrupted while they lived.

MRS. RIPLEY TO MR. SIMMONS.

"Waltham, Oct. 8th, 1843.

"I cannot help fastening the thread now which is to be spun across the ocean. We bore the farewell courageously, but we all felt as if the cloud which had been gathering so long had at last closed round our horizon. . . .

"Mr. Russell came the very day you left Boston, and the next morning we set out for Prospect,* on which we spent most of the day, searching every shady corner for mosses. The lichens he does not so much regard at present: nevertheless many were his revelations concerning the lower world of vegetation. How much I thought of you, it would take one to tell who has lost the friend with whom for two years all that has crossed their path, beautiful in nature, new in science, spiritual in thought, or true and pure and noble in life, has

* Prospect Hill, in Waltham,—a little less than five hundred feet high, and about a mile and a quarter from Mrs. Ripley's house.

been shared, and thereby doubled. But to return to Russell. He went up the hill, looking along the ground and calling out now at the sight of the reindeer moss, and then again at the variegated leaves of the *Pyrola maculata*, which he said was rare in this vicinity, and so on, till we reached the top of the hill, when he turned round, and, without expecting it, saw the extensive view which we used to look at last winter. He exclaimed with admiration enough to satisfy any lover of Waltham and its beauties. The lichen which you told me the farmers used for dyeing he calls *Parmelia saxatilis*. It is in color between lead and ashes, and grows everywhere on the walls, mingling with the light-green *P. caperata*, which I trust will often catch your eye on a Prussian or German rock and transport you back to the village where you live in many a heart. But I will not fill my paper with botany and Mr. Russell. I will only tell you that he showed me in his microscope the circulation of the sap in the cells of a small transparent plant. You could see the current of little globules passing up one side and down the other of the magnified cell. This is the Eureka of modern botany: nothing was detected before so like the circulation of the blood in the animal economy. . . .

"I fear the secular will quite crowd out the theological, so I give up the pen to Mr. Ripley."

And Mr. Ripley continues:

"Wife has given up the pen to me, and a villainous pen it is; I must mend it before I can make a mark."

Then follows a statement of parish affairs and prospects, ending with warm expressions of affection and desire for the return of the friend "in the hope of seeing whom again so many live."

"Darby-and-Joan-like, wife and I fix out a letter for you. It is like the old clergyman and his wife of whom Madam E. told me that they passed a night at her house,—both in the habit of smoking. The minister would smoke a few whiffs, then give the pipe to his better half, who would do

the same and hand it back again. In our case, however, wife begins and almost ends the work, so that little remains for me."

MRS. RIPLEY TO MR. SIMMONS.

"WALTHAM, Nov. 5th, 1843.

"You are by this time in London. How does Babylon the great look to you? I should think that men as they swarm in the streets of a strange city would look to one like phantoms: one almost loses sight of the undying spirit even on Waltham plain. If it were not for the fireside and the closet we should get to regard it as a matter of very little importance whether the demons fought or the brownies labored.

"*Sat. ev'g, Nov. 11th.*—The rain is descending in torrents. I have just put the finishing stitch to Rufus's* socks. The boys, all but two, are safe at their own firesides. The whistle of the wind is mingling in soft harmony with that of the Fitchburg railroad. Gore has just arrived, with all the dignity of a voter, to attend a Whig meeting. I don't know nor care on whose head the honors of the republic fall; but one thing I know,—that I am quite weary of railroad men, and men that play whist and drink wine. I have a stronger feeling of brotherhood with the poor Irish fellow that came to the study window where I was sitting yesterday to beg for work. We begin to talk of Concord again; but I suppose it will end as it begins. Day before yesterday the girls and I, in council in the dining-room, decided to strike, turn every boy out of the house, and trust for bread to the one or two private scholars which I have. The plan was all made out, notice was to be given to the parents at the Thanksgiving vacation, and the house was to be cleared the first of January of boys and servants; no more roasted turkeys, no more sponge cake, no

---

* Rufus was the hired man.

more entry stoves,—the dinner of herbs with love was all before us. But alas! when at the tea-table we proposed our reform, the cheerful face with which papa had returned from Lincoln was so changed that our spirits fell at once. Ezra to leave college, bills at Earle's unpaid, the pleasant wood fire extinguished forever, and an air-tight reigning in its stead,—these, with other phantoms of labor and privation, stalked in grim array past the love-feast of the dining-room, and here we are, just as we were before, girding ourselves each morning for the battle of the day. The association is to meet here next Tuesday. Mr. Ripley has been trying to smoke the poor bees out of the chimney this afternoon, lest they with their treasures should make part of the company; from the buzzing, there seems to be disturbance in the commonwealth.

"There came a letter from ——, asking to make an arrangement for an exchange; such a letter as a genial, good-humored person would write. It reminded me of what the Unitarians all were in my young days. They had come out from the dry bones of cant and formalism, with a message to the understanding. The goodness of God and man's comfortable position in this bright and convenient world were their constant theme. They sat secure under their own fig-tree, with a competence for life, free from the petty jealousies which competition engenders in the other professions; and their social affections in general, and especially toward their own fraternity, blossomed out in great luxuriance. But times are changed. The priest can no longer stand in the portico, calling out to those who are passing by, blinded by superstition or hoodwinked by authority. The understanding has had its day; the soul is hungering for food, and he that ministers at the altar must enter into the holy of holies himself, and bring it forth from thence. When the poor bees were buzzing yesterday with terror and dismay to find their foundations suddenly undermined with sulphur smoke, the doubt occurred whether superior beings might not regard the earthquakes and volcanoes which lay waste the face of our insignificant planet with as much indifference as we do the smoking of a bee-hive;

whether the waste of individual life and happiness might not be as unimportant in the economy of the great whole. But the soul answers, no. It declares that its interests are eternal; that its intuitions come directly from the centre of all life.—I am reading Timæus the Locrian, concerning the soul of the world and of nature, the work of an old Pythagorean philosopher supposed to have been contemporary with Socrates. I am refreshed by the utterances of these primitive worshipers of truth. They relieve me from the doubt whether the eyes of the soul, turned by Christian culture in one direction, may not see universal truths where it would have dreamed of no such thing if it had lived eighteen centuries ago. I return with deepened convictions to the simpler and sublimer teachings of Him to whom the Spirit was given without measure.

"Yesterday, being Sunday, Mr. —— preached, and I felt more than ever how fast I am receding from the church of which Unitarianism is the exponent, and that is the only manifestation of its power with which I am familiar. We must have the life of God in the soul. If we find it in the church, how venerable in its environment of olden time! but we eschew the church when it is only a mask to cover the want of it. Mr. —— preached from the text 'O wretched man,' etc. How the bucket of the gentleman danced up and down on the surface of that deep well of spiritual life from which the saints have in all ages drawn living water! But he is a pleasant fellow, with warm and quick sympathies, and by these I suppose enters largely into the joys and sorrows of his flock. I have just returned from a walk: wind blowing cold enough, but it is good to get out beneath God's pure and open heaven even this wintry evening,—the moon riding in mid-heaven in pure splendor, and Venus with Jupiter set like two diamonds in the front of night. Does not such a canopy seem a fit cover only for believing, loving souls? Still sliding into the homiletic; some spell surrounds me."

"January 9th, 1844.

"I was walking the other morning with Waldo Emerson in Concord, and I told him I thought the soul's serenity was at best nothing more than resignation to what could not be helped. He answered, 'Oh, no; not resignation, aspiration is the soul's true state! What have we knees for, what have we hands for? Peace is *victory*.'

"Still in the faith that home detail interests you, I enter into the minutiæ of New Year's presents. . . . But what is much better than presents from the boys is the fact that William Lyman takes interest enough in Greek and Latin to ride out to Waltham these frosty mornings, thermometer below zero, to read Xenophon and Tacitus to me.

"*February* 23, 1844.—To-morrow evening Mr. Emerson lectures at the Rumford. He has promised to bring a lecture 'which has legs.' But I fear, after all, wings will be sprouting out at the heels. The community at Brook Farm has changed its internal organization and adopted the Fourier system. I do not understand the nature of the change, but only the fact that some of the original settlers, finding the new system too mechanical for their taste, prefer to stand on their own legs as individuals, to being merged in a 'dormitory' or 'refectory' group."

"April 8th, 1844.

"DEAR FRIEND,—

"'*Parturit almus ager, Zephyrique tepentibus auris*
Laxant arva sinus; superat tener omnibus humor.'

"Just returned from a walk; the soft air, swelling buds, and moaning frogs are so associated with the past that we walk not alone, though the ocean separates us from the friend who was wont to lay with us the first spring garland on the altar of nature,—nature, dear mother, whose arms are open and lap spread to receive us 'when, with low-thoughted care confined and pestered in this pinfold here,' wearied and fretted, we throw ourselves upon her genial bosom, and dream of the heaven

which 'lay about us in our infancy.' Mother came out last Wednesday, being the day before Fast, to spend said anniversary with us. But she could not hold out against the fine weather and our entreaties, so she stayed till this morning, Monday. Fast was a most beautiful day, warm as July. The boys were off in the cars, with leave to stay till the next Monday. Soon after, Uncle George arrived, his great boots bringing with them no small quantity of the Concord soil. He joined us in the dining-room, converted, as you know, on such occasions into a cooking-room, to prepare for the once holy day, now become a holiday. The meat stuffed, and the puddings and cake in the oven, we repair to the parlor, to look out for the cars; and soon the motley current pours past the Townsends, no small part of it turning down the lane. Immediately all heads at the windows, to determine who is who in the group, and as soon as mother, Lizzy, Nannie, Susan T., and Sarah are made out, a rush from the house to welcome them to the joys of leisure and friendship. Next comes Ezra, with the news that Dr. Francis purposes, with Mrs. Francis, to take tea with us the next day. Congratulations over, the evening passes swiftly and gayly away. What is wanting in wit is made up in laughter. Lizzy comes freighted from the halls of the great, Uncle George with radicalism from Concord, and the sophomore with nonsense from Cambridge. Uncle George and Lizzy agree that their souls have no fellowship with Beacon Street. Mother is wide awake, eats blanc-mange in spite of Dr. Jackson, and, after she has gone through the form of retiring for the night with the girls Mr. Ripley is obliged to raise his voice with the admonition that 'it is time for honest folk to be asleep.' Now I am again at the morning, warm as July. After a social breakfast, which none can taste as those who keep boys, Uncle George leaves us for Brook Farm, to visit his old friends and see how Fourierism thrives. And in his stead comes Dr. Noyes, who makes the sermon, and a young Mr. ——, of whom I have told you before as 'a person to be much scrambled for both by the churches and by the ladies.' . . . Mother and I set

forth for the hills, beguiling the way with a constant buzz, which Mary somewhat ludicrously mimics. Saw the doctor and his coadjutor safe in their chaise, and then mother and I set forth for the greenhouse. Mr. Irish showed us all his things; and when we were sated with heat and fragrance, and had quenched our thirst from a broken flower-pot with the bright water from the cistern at the gate, we turned our steps homeward, and on the way met the party from Cambridge. By this time you will be willing that the various 'groups and series' should amuse and dispose of themselves as they best may, leaving you, as the Germans say, to find yourself. Mother and I have scoured the fields and climbed the rocks every day; and time would fail me to tell what we saw and what we said. This morning, which rose in mist, took mother away, and thus ends my tale. The 14th, Saturday, I spent in bed with headache. Sunday morning the sun looked out on the fields bright and warm as June. I rose at five, took an apple in my hand, and C.'s volume of Beethoven under my arm. I took the road to Prospect, sat down on a rock at the foot, and was reading my book, when I heard a rustling among the fallen leaves, and, turning round, a fawn laid his 'innocent nose' in my lap. The picturesque, however, soon vanished, with the illusion of the '*ferœ naturæ*,' for a gabbling among the trees announced the approach of four girls, with whom the fawn joined company and left me to my book. Between nine and ten I returned, so weary and red that the people who met me on the road did not recognize me. Mr. Lippitt preached,—a sensible, quiet man, without affectation. He made a good statement of our debt to the past and consequent obligation to the future, and pleased the conservatives by asserting that the community men entirely overlooked or disowned said debt. When we reached home we found Charles in the study. The evening passed most pleasantly. We had music. He asked me to walk with him next morning at five. Accordingly, the rising sun lighted us on our way to the mountain again. We sheltered ourselves from the cool northwest beneath the covert of the moss-grown rock on the top

of the hill. Charles warmed as he read and talked of the sublime inspirations of the deaf apostle. Charles is devoted to star-gazing: spends most of his evenings when here in consulting the old defaced dusty globe and drawing maps of the heavens.

"You recollect that stick with the *lichen hebraica* so beautifully sketched upon it, that I labored with my hand and you with your penknife to procure? alas! some vandal has given it to the flames. I have not met with another specimen before or since."

"May 20th, 1844.

"To-day is the third day of our holidays, and I am enjoying it alone. Sophia has gone to Lowell, to enact what Jean Paul would call an Idyll with Fanny A. Phebe is taking lessons in music again: we encourage it, as the gem in the bottom of her cup of daily labors and vexations with the nine urchins in the attic. Lizzy collects her tribe of pupils in Miss Cushing's parlor. They count much on amalgamation with Phebe's nine beneath the trees at recess, to eat their cakes and cut their jokes.

'Ye blessed creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make.
* * * * * *
My heart is at your festival,
* * * * * *
The fullness of your bliss, I feel, I feel it all.'

With this rapture of the poet I bid you good-night.

"*May* 22.—I have left a heap of stockings,—for stockings will wear out even in vacations,—to spend a few moments with you. I am writing in the girls' room. The fir-tree at the window is covered with little red sparrows picking the seeds from the cones: what preachers of faith they are! Last Saturday Mr. Ripley and myself, with the two youngest girls, went to Duxbury to pass Sunday. Duxbury is the Arcadia of my youth: the sand hills and pine forests, the moss-covered grave-stone of my grandfather, the very boards I used to tread on the way to church, now half buried in sand, are there still, but

they tell me of that which can never return; they reveal to me what I was and what I am. All of them

'speak of something that is gone.
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat.
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?
* * * * * *
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.'

"When we came home, we found mother assisting Mary to dress for a wedding. The wedding,—don't you wish you knew whose it was? No other than your young brother in the faith, J. W. Amiable, affectionate, domestic young people, looking forward to a quiet life of duty and love in the bosom of their parish,—poor things! they little know what is in store for them. But through trial come strength and wisdom. Mother went into Boston; Charles to walk with me, and so missed the train, but bore it tranquilly, and we sat down to study Virgil's description of the plough, and went out to realize our guesses with Rufus and his model."

"June, 1844.

"Charles whets his logic weapons and tries their temper on me. He takes the side of the '*Utile*,' I the '*Honestum*.' The other morning I was picking to pieces an old mattress in the barn, and was making a most disagreeable dust. Charles came from under the tree where he had been reading, and, seating himself on the hay-mow, began to discuss the subject

of the dissolution of the Union. He has a clear head, and gives me much light on questions of popular debate.

"Mr. Ripley suffers from the old enemy; he has taken a new post in the knee, and is not to be driven away by cotton or colchicum. So it is time I was in bed; for I must rise at five and work till five waiting on the boys. I have two youths to drag through Cicero and Cæsar into college in eight weeks; but it is not a disagreeable task, as they know the value of instruction, and there is something like disinterestedness in working for those from whom you hope to receive little in return. The youths with money give me shawls and caps, but very little satisfaction.

* * * * * * * * * *

"Hermann, and Werther's Charlotte are a proof that the man (Goethe) had an apprehension of true love and the dignity of virtue. The scene at the fountain is excellent,—and the Pfarrherr. The dignity with which Charlotte dismisses for the last time the love-distracted youth is peculiarly noble. It is virtue acting, not canting."

"WALTHAM, June 20th, 1844.

"Day before yesterday I went to Cambridge to meet a pleasant party at Dr. Francis's,—Miss Fuller, Sarah Clarke, Mrs. Farrar, the Whites, James Lowell, an artist by the name of Page with his very beautiful wife, Dr. Gray, etc. The party was for the Clarkes, who are soon to leave for the West. S. was quiet and intelligent as usual. William White and James Lowell kept the ball going in the way of conversation. There was nothing said to be remembered, but the talk was free and easy; no one felt any responsibility, but all were cheered and electrified by the atmosphere of wit and intelligence. William Tiffany's drawings were shown, who receives many compliments from connoisseurs. I know you take an interest in the fine boy, and will be glad to hear that on the same day he had read in public a dissertation on the effect of Christianity

on the fine arts, for which he received the first prize. I hope he will not be too much elated with success; he seems very modest still. The drawings we looked at were illustrations of the Ancient Mariner, and some from Goethe. I do not understand such matters, but they seemed to me full of life, especially the spirit of the storm in a cloud. . . . I returned in the morning cars. The engineer, a brother of Professor Felton, and the contractor, Mr. Belknap, attracted my attention. It makes one feel alive to see the workers in the world, efficient men, and believers too, though it be but in railroads; not wholly selfish either, and looking no farther than their own pockets, but working cheerfully and hopefully for others as well as themselves. When I saw the two aforesaid specimens of humanity conferring together, with an expression that showed life was a reality to them, I sympathized for the moment with them, and thought that the champions of ideas, who talk and talk while the cars fly by with bell and whistle, if they would be heard must keep serene and look benevolent, and not complain if the loaves and fishes fall to those whose rightful wages they are. J. W. and his pretty bride took tea with us this evening, looking as satisfied and happy as if they had just entered into rest instead of warfare."

"August 16th, 1844.

"Last Saturday, thermometer nearly eighty, Ezra and I set out for Duxbury at four o'clock in the morning, to follow Uncle Gershom to the grave. I believe you saw enough of him to be interested in the circumstances of his death. He had gathered a basket of his early corn, in which he took much pride, and was in the act of handing it to Mrs. Weston with a smile, when his knees sank under him, and he fell at the doorstep and never breathed again. A death beautiful, because in keeping with his life. A man most self-dependent, hating all pretension and display, and living so much out of doors as to be almost as much a part of nature as the trees

whose fruit he gathered. I loved him like a father, for he was part and parcel of my childish joys. In his youth he was the very embodiment of fun. You never could calculate on what he would do or say. And in his manhood, the staunch supporter of every good cause, he lived a silent but most efficient life, walking in his own path without fear or favor. Long before the temperance movement began, he had banished all liquors, even wine and cider, from his table. The evening after his funeral, being Sunday, there was a temperance meeting in the woods; and I should rather have been the subject of the tribute paid to his memory by those whom he had saved, than to have been crowned in the Capitol with the laurel or the oak. The grief of his children is worth all the sermons on immortality I ever heard. Everything is sacred which belonged to him. The old chair in which he sat beneath a tree has a large stone placed in it, that it may not be removed. They rejoice that the clothes he preferred to wear are too old to give away. *Aug. 22d.*—Last Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. Ames, Uncle George, and Charles with us. The evening better still, by the addition of Dr. and Mrs. Francis, who passed the night likewise; so there was no need to look at watches to see how time wagged. George told me an anecdote of Uncle Gershom so characteristic that I must repeat it. He was walking in his woods, and saw a man cutting down a tree; he concealed himself, that the man might not see him, and went home. When asked why he did not put a stop to the man's proceedings, he said, 'Could not the poor man have a tree?'"

"On the mountain one feels like a man and not a member. I would there were more of the mountain in life,—its faith and freedom. You have so often taken up the gauntlet against conventions that I do not fear bondage after this manner for you. But if perchance the pride of learning should fence you in any theological pen, I pray that the fence may never be close enough or high enough to hide *the* mountain."

"WALTHAM, Oct. 6th, 1844.

"DEAR FRIEND,—

"It is several weeks since I have spoken to you, not because you have been absent from my mind,—oh, no! but because these fine days have brought many friends, and many boys have brought cares. It is no longer, 'mother and Charles came out one day and returned the next,'—for mother is one of us: she has entered the penetralia, been initiated into the mystery of the household gods, comes to breakfast with the girls after the boys have retired, and so on. Then her divertissement is to mend the stockings and roll them up in the neatest manner, whiten sheets and napkins on the grass, watch the robins as they come in flocks for the berries on the mountain-ash tree at the west window, and take a stroll at evening with me, to talk of our children, to compare our experiences, what we have learned and what we have suffered, and, last of all, to complete with pears and melons the cheerful circle about the solar lamp these chill autumn evenings. Just now, however, she has gone, and the day that she went into the city, Mary Emerson, a sister of Mr. Ripley, who has not visited us before for many years, came at evening and has been with us till to-day. She is seventy years old, and still retains all the oddities and enthusiasms of her youth,—a person at war with society as to all its decorums; she eats and drinks what others do not, and when they do not; dresses in a white robe such days as these; enters into conversation with everybody, and talks on every subject; is sharp as a razor in her satire, and sees you through and through in a moment. She has read, all her life, in the most miscellaneous way, and her appetite for metaphysics is insatiable. Alas for the victim in whose intellect she sees any promise! Descartes and his vortices, Leibnitz and his monads, Spinoza and his *unica substantia*, will prove it to the very core. But, notwithstanding all this, her power over the minds of her young friends was once almost despotic. She heard of me when I was sixteen years old as a person devoted to books and a sick mother, sought me out in my garret without any introduction, and, though

received at first with sufficient coldness, she did not give up till she had enchained me entirely in her magic circle. . . . We took Miss Emerson to Brook Farm, Mr. and Mrs. Ripley* being old friends of hers. Things looked comfortless to me, in spite of the new buildings. Mr. and Mrs. Ripley, who were once the centre about which persons united by common intellectual and moral sympathies revolved, now seem to be units lost in a crowd.

"I talked with J. S. D., and asked him what he was doing. He said his business was to arrange juvenile industry, and that he found it quite difficult and disagreeable. Poor man! I cannot make one child work; I don't know what I should do with fifty. . . . Ezra is deep in metaphysics, and brings me many a case in casuistry to settle; tells me how Dr. Walker decides, and sometimes we venture to dissent from the oracle when the response is for a limit instead of a great principle."

MRS. RIPLEY TO MRS. FRANCIS.

[1844.]

"DEAR ABBA,—

"Ezra said you were glad to receive a note from me. It gives me great pleasure to believe it. When your father, who was everything to me so many years ago, said, 'Be a friend to my daughter,' he could not foresee that our lot would be cast so near together that constant intercourse would keep the chain bright. Years have not dimmed the clear, truthful vision nor chilled the warm and genial love of the beautiful and the good in the friend of my youth. And now that you have been and are laying me under a pecuniary obligation by your kindness to Ezra, which perhaps I shall never be able to repay, I do not feel embarrassed by the fear that I shall not, but rather rejoice in the fact of my entire confidence in your love.

"S. A. R."

---

* Mr. and Mrs. George Ripley.

MRS. RIPLEY TO MR. SIMMONS.

"Jan'y 9th, 1845.

"G. read me letters from his friend who is studying for the Catholic Church, full of deep humility and generous catholicism. I would that the self-satisfied formalists who swarm in Unitarian pulpits—and not in those only, I suppose—could hear them. You will wonder, perhaps, that such a spirit should have found its home in the Catholic Church. But the form in which a soul deeply stricken by religious conviction clothes the expression of its faith and love is an idiosyncrasy which we cannot always understand unless we understand thoroughly the person who is the subject of it. . . . Phœbe comes home this morning and tells us that Mr. Clarke had announced to his society his intention of exchanging with Mr. Parker, and thereupon one man took up his cane and marched out. I should like to be in the pulpit once, to be able to say, 'I shall on the next Sabbath exchange with Theodore Parker: first, because I believe him to be a religious man, for religion I understand to be the surrendering of the soul to God and to the guidance of his Holy Spirit; and secondly, because he is a friend of man, and Jesus was the friend of man.' And if the sleek citizens with varnished boots, and souls narrower than their purses, should take up their canes and walk, I would betake myself to a more generous brotherhood in the potato-field, and leave the pulpit to those willing to walk in such a treadmill."

"Jan. 27th, 1845.

"A few days since came the packet by the Slow Dutchman, full of interesting matter. I should hesitate about what I have to write in return, if it were not that the parts of your letters are devoured with most eagerness which assure us that you love and think of us always. We heard they were in Boston and hesitated about a ride to Cambridge, lest they should arrive while we were gone; home at half-past ten; found Mr. R. reading his share with a look of triumph over us; time left

before bed only to read, or rather glance over, the latest and most loving parts. Next day all daylight swallowed up in school and household; evening, Dr. Francis. Next day, Mr. Ripley absent, additional burden of boys; evening, in bed with headache; Saturday morning, boys again, with cookery added; one hour after dinner at last gained, or rather snatched, for the Alps. Anna Margaretta and the flowers most pleasing, —the map a great help. Evening brought divinity student, Mr. White, son of Judge White of Salem; very gentlemanly, with much literary culture; been at Calcutta, Alexandria, Grand Cairo, passed fourteen months in Europe. Sunday morning took him to Lincoln; brought in his place Dr. and Mrs. Francis and their son, and Mrs. Locke with an impetuous little curly-haired fellow three years old. The divinity student so agreeable that we were glad of him for a second night. William White, of Watertown, at tea, oozing out at every pore for the slaves."

"Feb'y, 1845.

"You write to Mr. Ripley of the preaching in Switzerland. I am more and more convinced that the past is, as the boys say, 'no go' for the pulpit, any more than abstractions. The philosopher finds in its facts material for induction wherewith to verify the principles which lie at the foundation of human society; but living, feeling, acting man must be seized through the present. The past can affect him only when in the cycle of human experience it stands by the side of the present in similitude or contrast. Galilee and Jerusalem will fill the mind when they are acted over again in Waltham or Boston. I think the only efficient preachers (though not at all to my taste) are those who lift up their voice and spare not, in spite of public opinion, against licensed violations of truth and right and mercy in Church and State. The lyceum may enlighten the intellect and feed the imagination, but life is the province of the pulpit. I believe you will think I have

usurped it; but when thoughts occur as I read your letter, I naturally say them to you.

"Uncle George came, and a divinity student, Thomas Hill,* a distinguished mathematician, such as nature turns out of her mould only now and then. Talked of La Place's theory of creation, and how they used to try to find the parallax of fixed stars and did not succeed, and how they tried nowadays and did succeed."

"April 22d, 1845.

"As to the theology of your last, I cannot reply to it, because I have forgotten the provocation that called it forth. The charge of inconsistency I think I could disprove; but I will leave it for some brighter hour. I will only say that when I was eighteen, my appetite for theology was so intense that I learned German without the aid of grammar, and by means of a dictionary with one French word and one Russian,—because I thought the store-house of its treasures was there. It was an era in my life when my father gave me leave to buy a Griesbach, the dry critical preface to which was far more exciting than any reading can ever be to me again. And now I am so changed. Religion has become so simple a matter to me,—a yearning after God, an earnest desire for the peace that flows from the consciousness of union with him. It is the last thought that floats through my mind as I sleep, the first that comes when I wake. It forms the basis of my present life, saddened by past experience. It bedims my eyes with tears when I walk out into the beautiful nature, where love is all around me. And yet no direct ray comes to my soul. Perhaps it is God's peace instead of God I seek: so I sit and wait in patience for his grace, and will still wait. Earnests and foretastes come; but humble waiting in days of darkness will, I trust, bring better fruits. You say we shall fight. The

* The Rev. Dr. Hill, now of Portland, Maine,—late president of Harvard College.

war will, I think, be one of words. Yet how can we look at things alike? You must increase, but I must decrease; you are just entering the fullness of being, I have proved and found it vain. I intended to have filled this page with other matters, but to-night I do not feel like talking about persons and things; to-morrow we will meet perhaps in the phenomenal world. *April 23d.*—I feel half inclined to draw my pen over last night's page: an experience seems untrue as soon as uttered. Both seeking truth, we shall beckon each other onward to the same centre, if by different paths. And now for details. To begin with the parish, the first act of the new administration was to secure Mr. Hedge for the month of April. It is fine, you will know, for us to have him with us every Saturday night and Sunday. Parish affairs bring me to Mr. Ripley, who has had a long reprieve from his enemy in the foot, but on whose forehead eighteen months have left many a wrinkle and gray hair. Mr. Hedge remarks that he looks careworn, much changed to him; no wonder, for his days are a constant fight. Oh, if we ever live to see these seven great boys into college! He warms up with pleasure whenever you are mentioned, and especially whenever you mention him. . . . Mother, I believe, has won Lizzy's heart from me, but I am not jealous: I ask nothing from the young ones but that they should be good and happy. Ezra is still exemplary for diligence and economy. He is to appear on the stage in a Greek dialogue the coming May exhibition. The girls are intolerant of what they call his self-conceit; they cannot stand the air with which he swings his cane and shakes his hair away from his eyes; but I am his firm ally. They may smile and jeer, but he has the satisfaction of an innocent life and virtuous industry."

"May 13th, 1845.

"My chances to write are few, for you know at this season my day is devoted to boys; and mother and Charles, who are with us now, monopolize the evening by their agreeable conversation. Besides, the trees are all bursting into life and

beauty, and the moon is just entering her second quarter, and for the last two days the thermometer has stood at 80°: so of course we are under the trees and on the stone wall all the play-time. . . . A voice from below summoned me to welcome Mr. Hedge, whom Mr. R. brought with him from the association. The evening conversation easy and genial, springing from friendship without a shade of distrust. I say, with Horace, '*nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico.*'

"I have no private scholars, and so spend my days in the noisy school-room, aiding Mr. Ripley and ripening my plans of life for Concord. I went to see Dr. Gray the other day, and he showed me a splendid microscope mounted like a telescope, and some very pretty phenomena of crystals seen by polarized light; and told me of a beautiful work on European mosses, with magnified engravings, just received at the Cambridge Library, and that I should have it next after himself."

"June 22d.

"The books that I have, speak most respectfully of German lichenologists and muscologists. If you find any treatise on these commoners of nature, get it for me.—It is a delightful summer day, the lawn covered with hay-cocks. We are spending it alone. We looked out for George, Charles, and Gore till bedtime, but in vain: we must eat our cherries which the girls picked amidst the wet leaves, without them. The great cherry-pie, too, on which I expended my strength and sugar, they will not taste,—that is, if the noon train do not bring them. 25th.—The noon train brought the youths; the evening, Uncle George. We had music, the piano with accompaniment on the flute, plenty of cherries and plenty of wit. G. and C. act on each other magnetically, as they say nowadays. C. described with all his powers of satire the style of debate at the abolition meetings he attended on election week, with an evident undercurrent of delicate respect for the state of mind of the debaters. At last they got upon

the White Mountains, so fertile a source of travelers' difficulties and dangers. But who can tell of the seasoning of successful jokes and amusing anecdotes! You know the genial times when each loses himself in the free spontaneous flow of thought and fancy. We work hard, to be sure, but '*noctes cœnæque deorum*' like these will offset much. The other evening I met C. C., who told me 'a large man with a carpet-bag had inquired the way to our house.' I hurried home, and found Russell seated in the dark, in the parlor, with Mr. R. We soon had a light, the box of mosses and lichens and microscopes all, and he told me ever so much in answer to the questions I had laid up to ask him. In my last visit to Duxbury I had found a lichen composed almost altogether of net-work. I searched in vain for a description of it, and he tells me that it has not been described, and that Tuckerman in his catalogue will call it *Cladonia Russellii.* We walked at five o'clock this morning, and you would be well bored with barbarous names, if I did not fear that these humble denizens of the forest would stand but a poor chance against Neander and the fine arts. Did I tell you about a beautiful scarlet-cup mother and I picked up in a rich spot near the spring on Prospect? I could not tell whether it was fungus or lichen, but my botanist decided for the first. He had not seen your powdery lichen, and said they were all valuable on account of their 'habitat.' Don't forget to pick more: there is no knowing what you may do for science. Apropos of fungi, I must quote Linnæus's description of them, it is so poetic,—and you are in a region where there is faith in the trinity of Philosophy, Poetry, and Religion. He characterizes the little fellows as '*nomades, autumnales, barbari, denudati, putridi, voraces. Hi, Florâ reducente plantas hiematum, legunt relictas earum quisquilias sordesque.*'

"Excuse, as before, all errors in spelling, and let the superabundance of letters in some words make up for the deficiencies in others."

"Sunday morning, July 20th.

"Just returned from a walk with ——. He talked of the religious state of several of his friends, those who assert and feel the soul's want of a mediator,—that it cannot be saved but by Christ; he disposed to consider it not an accidental but a genuine part of the religious history of the soul, I not entirely assenting. Whenever we talk together, you come naturally to my mind. Believing in your truth as I do, I cannot but look with interest to the development of your religious thought, in relation to your intellectual experience in its other aspects. . . . The intellect is so apt to run across the path of religious thought, or rather of Christian theory, and to shroud its aberrations in a mist of mysticism or untruth, imposing on itself or others, and the bias is so strong on the side of the position which we have taken in life, or into which we have been drawn, that I am apt to distrust appeals to intuitions and ultimate facts, which do not reveal themselves to my differently constituted mind. The road to the Father has always seemed to me direct, and, though constantly forsaken, always open, always shone upon by a light from above,—the guiding, helping hand ever extended to the wanderer.

"Elizabeth has gone to Lowell to watch with Mrs. Ames's sick child, a dear little creature about two years old, whose case the physicians have pronounced incurable. . . . We should be able to endure our own troubles, if it were not for sympathy with others. Poor Margaret herself, with everything about her to make her happy, is marked with the seal of death. She seems to me like one of my own children, for I had almost the whole care of her in her infancy. I was her only teacher, she came with me to Waltham, and was married at our house. Who can call life tame when it is so full of wonder and sorrow and love? . . . You realize that it was wise not to have early entangled yourself in relations that would have made your present impracticable. I once thought a solitary life the true one, and, contrary to my theory, was moved to give up the independence of an attic covered with books for the responsibilities and perplexities of a parish and

a family. Yet I have never regretted the change. Though I have suffered much, yet I have enjoyed much and learned more. The affections as they multiply, spread out in rays to the circumference, but the soul returns, not driven back by desertion, but willingly, to its true centre, the God within.

"The time draws nigh when we are to look for mother. The beans are growing finely, and we are looking forward to the time when we shall gather and shell them together. She will be with us at our commencement holidays, the brightest days to us of all the year. I like your letters to mother much: you tell her little things that transport us at once to the place where you are: we meet the passengers on the road, carry their bundles, and learn the secret of their life. We stroke the rosy cheeks of the children as they prattle to you of the flowers, and we think of Werther. Apropos of Werther, you express astonishment that it should interest me. Remember that I have come to the age when a piece of psychology interests me as much as a new and curious subject for dissection does the doctor. . . . Continue your laudable practice of gathering and preserving specimens for your friends this side of the ocean. The blue pond-weed is now in blossom, with many an asclepias of divers hues. The large blue flowers of the succory grace the corners of the road, and the spiræas and eupatoria are just about to unfold their blossoms. I am at my usual seat on the benches under the locust-trees every morning, listening also as usual to Horace and Virgil. This morning I took the letters with me, to read and enjoy during the intervals of the going and coming of the youth. William L. takes an interest: so I read to him the story about the peasant with the bundle, etc., that he might have something to tell his mother, and explained to him what I thought were the true objects of traveling. How much your interest in the battle-marked fields must have been increased by having so lately read Alison!

"I have just received a beautiful edition of a French work on botany according to the present mode of analysis, from Dr. Gray. As far as I have read, the author has introduced

me to nothing new, but yet there is great pleasure in getting at the mind of a man of genius through his scientific method. The way in which he holds up his subject and unfolds its wonders to your view is always his own. The French are remarkable in this line. Their mathematics and chemistry and botany are well worth reading as specimens of genius."

"The twilight has closed in upon me, so I close the book, the 'Samson Agonistes,' the noble poem, so classic in its form that it transports you to the grove of the avenging deities in front of Athens, while its holy music and exalted sentiment descend from Zion's hill, or flow from Siloa's brook, 'fast by the oracle of God.' . . .

"I recognize my obligations to Christianity as the chief factor in the product of my present mind. The germ of intuition lies buried in every soul; the inspired man speaks, and it responds. Watered in youth by the silent dews of his divine utterances, warmed by his image or the faint reflection of it in the lives of those we love and trust, holy intuitions unfold in foliage, too often unconscious of the secret source by which they live. A miracle in the popular sense my mind rejects. Cannot we love and disagree? I can not only love but respect in you the different phases."

CHAPTER IV.

MR. SIMMONS returned from Europe in the autumn of 1845. Very soon afterward he was married to Miss Mary Emerson Ripley, Mrs. Ripley's second daughter.

In the spring of 1846 the Ripley family left behind them the cares of parish and boarding-school, and removed to the "Old Manse" in Concord, on the right bank of the Concord

River, and within sight of the spot where the first repulse was given to the British troops in the war of our independence. Their return was the event which caused the removal of Hawthorne, who had occupied the manse for a time after the death of Mr. Ripley's father, the Rev. Dr. Ezra Ripley. Dr. Ripley had lived there for more than sixty years, as the minister of the town. The mother of Mr. Ripley, at the time of her marriage to Dr. Ripley, was the widow of his predecessor, the Rev. William Emerson, for whom the manse was built. This lady was also the daughter of a former minister, Rev. Daniel Bliss, and granddaughter and great-granddaughter of the two Bulkeleys, still earlier pastors of the old town. Thus the family came with every hereditary claim to the respect and affection of their neighbors in Concord. The presence of Mrs. Ripley's sister Mrs. Bartlett and her family and the neighborhood of her kinsman Mr. Emerson, were a great pleasure to her. Her youngest son, Ezra, was in his senior year at Harvard College, and the two youngest girls were at school in Boston. The elder children were busy elsewhere with the tasks of life, but flitted in and out from time to time with news of the world and of friends.

The simple but complete hospitality of the house was not less than in Waltham, nor did "due feet ever fail" to seek the blessed threshold where so cordial a welcome and such inspiring society awaited them. Mr. Ripley writes to his sister at this time, "We have a quiet and industrious life in this pleasant spot. I enjoy it more and more every day, and Sarah is perfectly happy. She works hard all the time, but has nothing to trouble or vex her." Gathering currants and raspberries, or peas and asparagus, from the garden, or in the house, cooking, dusting, or mending,—her mind and heart were free while her hands worked; and her friends were at liberty to follow her in household tasks of which she never made any secret or any boast. It was in this way that she simplified very much the problems of social intercourse and hospitality.

She still received scholars, one or two at a time,—but not as

members of her family,—to fit for college, or to carry them on in advanced studies when exiled for a season from college for idleness or misdemeanor. It may have been the desire or the necessity of teaching others that drew her to the study of mathematics and the exact sciences, of which we find little mention in her early letters; but it is certain that she was a capable and inspiring teacher of these subjects, and sent her youths back to college with new insight and inspiration, and fit to take their places in the higher classes.

On the evening of the 24th November, 1847, the family circle was gathering for the next day's Thanksgiving festival. It was dark and stormy. The father had gone for the third time with his carriage to bring the last installment of children and kindred from the railroad, when he suddenly fell back in the carriage upon the shoulder of his eldest daughter, and never spoke again. "His own affectionate heart," said Mrs. Ripley, "was spared the pain of parting."

The following letter to Mrs. Ripley from Mr. Emerson, then in England, will show what a cordial affection her husband had inspired in his friends:

MR. R. W. EMERSON TO MRS. RIPLEY.

"MANCHESTER, ENGLAND, 26th December, 1847.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

"I heard with surprise and grief of your loss, and the shock with which it came,—the greatest loss to you and to all your household,—without repair; the loss to me also of a dear old friend, like whom I have now few or none. He was the hoop that held us all staunch, with his sympathies of family and with that disinterestedness which we have hardly witnessed in any other person. What rare devotion to his friends! What a cloud of witnesses I recall who will thankfully and affectionately press his claims to almost the first place among faithful and efficient benefactors! I may well say benefactor, for in will and in act he was both early and late one of mine,—and never otherwise. . . . I know not where we shall find in a

man of his station and experience a heart so large, or a spirit so blameless and of a childlike innocence. L. writes me very truly of the 'opportunity' of his death at a moment and in an act so characteristic. Yes, it is so; and yet he was never out of character, and, at any time, would have been found in his place. How sad it is, and will be! He had reached his chosen place, and all things were taking happiest form and order under his care. 'Tis sorrowful that such a felicity should be broken up, and that you should be forced now to reconstruct your home. But he has not withdrawn far. He has identified himself so much with life and the living that we shall find him everywhere a presence of good omen. My love to Elizabeth, and Mary, and Gore, and to all the children. He has stood by them until they were sufficient to themselves, and has enjoyed their security and success.—And now that he has gone who bound us by blood, I think we must draw a little nearer together, for at this time of day we cannot afford to spare any friends. I wonder to think—here, with the ocean betwixt us—that I have suffered you to live so near me and have not won from the weeks and months more frequent intercourse. I hope L. has cheered you by communicating her hearty affection for all she beheld in your husband. To my mother he is an irreparable loss. As I look homeward now, I miss a friend who constituted much of its worth and attraction for me. But I must write you again with more hope.

"Most affectionately yours,

"WALDO E."

In 1852, Anne, the youngest but one of Mrs. Ripley's children, who had been married about three years before to Mr. George Loring, then of Concord, died in her mother's house, where she was taken ill on a visit, leaving a little boy of less than two years old to her mother's and sisters' care.

The next break in the circle was the death of her beloved friend and son-in-law, Mr. Simmons,* who after leaving Wal-

* Of this brilliant and accomplished man but little permanent record remains.

tham had been settled successively in Springfield and Albany, and who came home to die of consumption, in the house which his mother had built, next to the "Old Manse." Mrs. Simmons had been drawn thither from Boston by the friendship which had grown up between the two mothers and their families. After his death his wife and children lived with Mrs. Ripley in the manse, the declining health of the elder Mrs. Simmons requiring quiet and freedom from the noisy life of young children. In a few years Mrs. Simmons died. After this the younger Mrs. Simmons removed to the house which her children inherited from their grandmother. But this was so near to the manse that it was hardly a separation. In the year 1860 the youngest of these children, a beautiful girl of five years, was taken away from the little group by death,—another sorrow for that sympathizing heart which more than ever lived in the life of her children. The death of Mrs. Bartlett, the sister of Mrs. Ripley, soon followed. And then came the war, which laid such a load upon the hearts of parents, and of those who, loving their country as one, could not be at peace while she was divided, or while other hearts bled. Many of Mrs. Ripley's former pupils and the sons of her friends and pupils, the flower of our youth, were in the army. Her own youngest son, Ezra, was there, and died in 1863, on the Mississippi, near Vicksburg, in the service of the Union, leaving a young wife tenderly loved by his family.

He graduated at Harvard College in 1832, and died in the summer of 1855. He was first settled over the Unitarian Society at Mobile; but his conscience moved him there to utterances upon the subject of slavery which were as courageous as they were unwelcome, and he was forced to leave the city for fear of a mob; nor was this the only instance in which he bore brave testimony on this subject. Three of his children survive,—two sons and a daughter,—children that are worthy of him. During his last illness he selected a few sermons which he desired should be privately printed as his latest gift to certain friends, and wrote what he called a "Fragment of a Preface" for the little book. These discourses, entitled "Six Sermons," and the words of singular beauty with which they are prefaced, are a worthy but all too brief memorial,—thoughtful, devout, and high-minded. "There is here," he truly says, "no conceit or hollow declamation, but sincere thought, such as I am capable of; and the themes are large."

All these events and anxieties laid a most heavy burden upon her loving and tender heart. Her youngest daughter, married* just before the beginning of the war, still remains, however, "a star of hope," "a haven of rest," amid the sad forebodings and sorrows of the times. The young pair settled at Milton, and after a time assumed the care of the little orphan boy, their sister Annie's child, who had grown too old to be left solely to feminine guidance; an arrangement for which Mrs. Ripley's satisfaction and gratitude find continual expression in her letters. With her daughter Mrs. Simmons at the next door, the life of growing children was still a constant spring of interest and hope. Elizabeth, the eldest daughter, now the housekeeper of the manse, gave always the same hospitable welcome to old and newer friends which had distinguished the Waltham home, and many were the cordial gatherings that kept alive the social flame—where each brought some contribution of fragrant wood or spice to cast upon the fire. Visits to her daughter at Milton, and the hopes and joys that came into her life with the birth of her daughter's two boys, of whom the grandmamma now made herself the playfellow, varied her life with scenes in which no sad associations bore a part.

Among the letters belonging to the period following Mrs. Ripley's removal to Concord, there are two or three to Mrs. Francis which may be inserted here:

MRS. RIPLEY TO MRS. FRANCIS.

1849.

"I received, dear friend, your affectionate note and invitation, but cannot accept, as I have engaged to prepare two youths for college, and cannot leave them any day but Saturday. So, on some Saturday when baking and other cares do not prevent, I shall see you, I hope. But why not come and

* To Mr. James B. Thayer, then a lawyer in Boston, now a professor in the Law School of Harvard University.

see me? I do wish you would. It seems so long since we have walked and talked together, and compared notes of experience as we have been wont to do from earliest days. Your form and face the first time I saw you are as vivid at this moment as at that. How long a piece we have traveled together! Ere long we shall be called to set our houses in order and go, we know not whither. But death is an event as natural as birth, and faith makes it as full of promise. But faith, alas! is denied to certain minds, and submission must take its place. The Unknown, which lighted the morning of life, will hallow and make serene its evening. Conscious or unconscious, we shall rest in the lap of the Infinite."

"CONCORD, January 21st, 1850.

"DEAR FRIEND,—

"I am grieved to learn that you are not in good spirits. Now that you know where the seat of the evil is, why not come to Concord to refit? Here is the *solid day*. '*Hic focus, et tædæ pingues, hic plurimus ignis.*'—'*Sunt nobis mitia poma.*'—'*Pocula * * novo spumantia lacte.*' Come, let us have a revival in friendship; let us realize the dreams of our youth. I know you will think your place at home cannot be supplied; but, dear Abba, this is the form the fiend takes when the pressure of the responsibilities of life is breaking down the conscientious, self-devoted spirit. The balance between soul and body must be restored, if you would effectually help those you love, and I know they must be ready to make any sacrifices which your absence from home may require. Come, not for days or weeks, but till the tabernacle of flesh is in thorough repair. I cannot say how much I should enjoy your presence, dear friend of my earliest and best days. Did not your father then smile on our union? Let us live for a while in the past.

"Yours with undying love,

"S. A. R."

"CONCORD, October 28th, 1850.

"DEAR FRIEND,—

"The yearly offering of the Old Manse comes this year in the shape of *early* apples, the russets not being in eating yet. John L. Russell made me a visit yesterday with his microscope, and showed me the internal structure of mosses and lichens. I had seen engravings of the same before, but never the beautiful and curious organization itself. How I wished you were here, you, the one among many, who have eyes and ears for such things! Dearest friend, I hope we shall see you before winter shuts us in; ever welcome will your presence be to us."

A few letters to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Gamaliel Bradford, and to her niece, the daughter of Mrs. Bradford, are here added:

MRS. RIPLEY TO MRS. BRADFORD.

"CONCORD, Nov. 30th, 1854.

"DEAR SOPHIA,—

"Friendship is better than mince-pies: this is the text. The subject is, that, friends being absent and money scarce, this is the first Thanksgiving Day in my life for which we have provided neither turkey nor pie, and so I have time to tell you how much I think of you. How could I help it on this day consecrated to social festivities, when we have from olden time enjoyed so much in mutual sympathies? How many times our hearts have beat with joy at the sight of such a glorious sunshine as is now pouring in at my window, when the carriage from Lowell and that from Concord were sure to bring dear Margaret and Martha with their tribe, to meet the friends who had arrived the night before! What a buzz of voices! what a freedom from all constraint! Surely our family union has been blessed, and on its remembrance we must live, as link after link is broken in the chain which once held it together. You will be glad to hear that Martha is well and

expects her children. Sophy always dines with them. I was so sad to hear that you had been sick again; but those who brought the tidings reported you better and cheerful. I have lately received two letters from George, the first for several months. Letters from Paris must have been lost in the Arctic, as these are dated from Padua and Florence. When I come to see you I will bring Phœbe's. . . . I must leave you to dress to go to the Emersons'. We are going four,—E., G., M., and myself. I suppose we shall meet Dr. and Mrs. C. T. Jackson. The doctor is agreeable to me, he has so much to tell that I want to know. The Lorings have had the dear little boy for three or four days, else we should take him with us. A few days of absence makes me sad to think that perhaps the time may come when I shall lose him altogether. What should I do without him! His little roots have crept into my whole life: they could not be torn out without taking a great part with them; but we will not forebode. Every hour brings its blessing as well as its sorrow. Dear Sophia, I could say much, but have no time. Yours, with much love,

"SARAH."

"CONCORD, August 21st, 1856.

"DEAR SOPHIA,—

"I thought you would like to hear about my Duxbury visit. We found them well. We rode to the beach one day, and walked to the pond another. The music of past days sighs through the pines. There was my Arcadia. How my heart used to beat with joy when I caught the first glimpse of the old church-spire as it appeared and re-appeared through the woods when I used to be at father's side in the chaise which went semi-annually or quarterly to carry grandfather his dividends! The old house, with its high stone steps, the barrels on each side filled with morning-glories and nasturtiums, which, entwined, hung in festoons over the old door; the little parlor and old easy-chair in which we always found the palsied old man, who received us with tearful embraces;

the great pear-tree at the gate, full of orange pears; the ground strewed with golden high-tops; the girl in the corn-barn paring apples to dry; the woods filled with huckleberries;—how sadly they blend to connect the past with the present and contrast with the future! Why is it that we so hold on to the garment that is falling from us, and look behind as we go onward? But enough of this. I was more than ever impressed with the reality that we belong together, this visit, than before. I hope you will never stay away from us so long again. We had a letter from Gore* yesterday, reporting rather more comfortable circumstances, as his house is finished; but he has still to do his own house-work. I hope, dear Sophia, you will not be sick again. Good-night, with much love.

"S. A. R."

"DEAR SOPHIA,—

"Phœbe reports you not well. Do take care of yourself and expel the cough. Hearing that you are not well reminds me what it would be to lose your loving society. We have kept step together through a long piece of road in the weary journey of life: we have loved the same beings and wept together over their graves. I have not your faith to console me, as they drop one after another from my side; yet my will, I trust, is in harmony with the divine order, and resigned where light is wanting. The sun looks brighter and my home more tranquil as the evening of life draws near. Would to heaven that the lives of the dear ones that remain could be insured to me till its end! Then I could fold my hands in perfect peace, ready, if such is the law of finite existence, to breathe the last breath of consciousness into the infinite source of light and love whence it came.

"You cannot think how much I expect to enjoy a visit from you, now that I am a spare hand and so have plenty of leisure

---

* He had recently gone to Minnesota.

to walk and talk and sympathize with those with whom I have gone hand in hand through so many years of joy and sorrow. . . . If you are not well enough to come soon, I am all ready to come to you; I can come any day, but it would be so much more to me to have you here. Don't talk about the house being full; it is Mary's life to keep it full, and no one would enjoy a visit from you and Sarah more or so much as Mary. Dear sister, do come, if you can; if not, I will come to you."

[1859.]

"DEAR SOPHIA,—

"Can there be a possible chance that I may never look upon your dear face again? Am I to stand on the declivity of life, while one after another drops from my side of those who have been so long parts of myself? You are the vision of my nights; you appear to me for the first time in the little parlor of the house in South Street, a graceful and bright being of sixteen or seventeen, with a becoming straw hat and a most agreeable smile. I still see the corner of the room where you sat, though I see nothing else connected with the visit. Then the scene changes to your uncle Blake's, where I found you one morning practicing on the guitar before the family had arisen from their beds. After your closer connection with us as a family, our interviews so crowd together in the background of the past that I am kept awake as if solving a mathematical problem to arrange them in their proper time and place as they press in confusion upon the scene. How much we enjoyed those evening rides to Cambridge, to the house you had planned and built, where we forgot, for an hour or two, the school bondage of home! How much you did to soften the pillow of decline and death for the father I loved and respected so much! How can I recall or arrange the happy meetings we have had together as a family in Waltham or Lowell! How much you were to dear Margaret! How much Martha has always enjoyed, and still enjoys, your society! Do you wonder that I should desire to see you now? Still, I

should not be willing to see you at the risk of exciting and doing you harm. So I will try to content myself with thinking of you with hope when I can. But sorrow, not hope, is the color of old age.

"Your Sister."

MRS. RIPLEY TO HER NIECE MISS SARAH H. BRADFORD.

[1860.]

"DEAR SARAH,—

"Crowned with the modish cap you were so kind as to send me, I shall not be afraid to take a seat at your conservative dinner-table, as a citizen of the rebellious town where the first blood was spilt in the Revolutionary War. There is no need of Christmas-presents to keep bright the chain which binds me to you all. Your last visit left behind a flavor which will not soon pass away.

"Tell your mother how much I thought of her on the day of Mrs. Simmons's funeral. It was a consecrated hour. The bright sun shone through the large window in the little parlor where we have together sympathized in joy and sorrow. No discordant element was mingled in the little circle which had loved and served her. Mr. Clarke said to Elizabeth when he took the chair by her side, '*Your mother* is gone: you have been a daughter to her.' Mr. Clarke said not a word too much. He has known her long and intimately, her sons were in college with him, and she was one of the first who joined his free church. He has visited her often since she has been in Concord. I cannot tell your mother in this note what I want to say, and can give you no idea of our love and desire to see your face among us all again."

In April, 1861, Mrs. Ripley's youngest daughter was married to Mr. James B. Thayer. I am indebted to Mr. Thayer for the following sketch of Mrs. Ripley as she appeared in her later years:

"My acquaintance with Mrs. Ripley was confined to the

last ten or twelve years of her life. I first spoke with her in 1855: it was at her own house, where I was a chance visitor; and I shall never forget the simple cordiality of her reception and her conversation. It was nearly four years before I saw her again, and then I came to her house as one who was to be her son-in-law. From that time until her death I had an intercourse with her of increasing intimacy and affection. A person of a more sweet, sympathetic, and feminine character I never saw; she was the very soul of gentleness. And with these special womanly charms, she had a masculine strength of understanding. So vivacious and penetrating was her intelligence, such wit, such learning had she, and such a cordial, wide hospitality of thought, that one came to her not merely for the most kind sympathy that she always gave, but for that total intercourse of thought and sentiment which is the highest and most blessed thing that can take place between two human beings. To sit with her through a long morning in her little sunny parlor, or to walk with her on an autumn day under the yellow light of the maples and talk of the subjects that most engaged her kindly and elevated spirit, was perfect happiness. In her sweet presence it was always 'a season of calm weather;' cares fell away, and the intellect, in that beautiful atmosphere, had sight of great and animating thoughts.

"But all this tells little that can help a stranger to any precise knowledge of her. How shall one convey to a person that did not know her some more definite impression?

"In her bearing there was nothing of the woman of society; all was peculiarly plain and simple; and yet nothing could have improved it. She was spare of figure and rather tall. Her head was of a beautiful shape, and its comely, ample hair, once of a dark brown, but early turned gray, was partially covered with a cap. Her complexion was fair, and her face full of healthy color; her eyes were clear blue, and of a wonderful quickness of movement, of a good size and rather near together; her nose was regular in shape, straight, prominent, and handsome; her mouth large, but delicate and full of sensibility. As to the total expression of the face, it was most

attractive,—brimful of sense, character, and swift intelligence; but perhaps the chief charm of it, like that of her rich and exquisite voice, was a certain delightful kindness. Her manner, as I have indicated, was wholly unconventional, simple and friendly: without being precisely shy, she often gave one the impression of an unobtrusive yet extreme solicitude to be in nobody's way: it was the manner of one who wished only for the pleasure of listening, and of quietly helping on the comfort of others. But when she was sure of her company, how cheerfully and how fast she talked! how responsive she was to everything gay and animated, and how she lost herself, so to speak, in the general soul! Hers was no meagre or starved nature, but a warm and cordial one.

"But when I speak of her 'helping on' the happiness of others, I am reminded of the absence of what might seem like an effort to help on anything. All things came from her as the untroubled outflow of a sweet nature; it seemed that she could never proceed by the methods of labor and discipline. And yet, when one stopped to consider how laborious her life had been, how dedicated to her household and to her husband's school and parish, one saw embodied in these quiet ways the result of a life full of self-denial and steadily conformed to the law of duty.

"As to her habits of life, her letters will show how frugal they were. Neither Mrs. Ripley nor her husband had inherited any property which contributed to their support, and they had supplemented the small salary of a country minister by the income of their boarding-school. In this way a modest property had been laid by, which was the chief support of the family after moving to Concord; but the comfort of Mrs. Ripley during her later years was materially increased by the gifts, as thoughtful as they were generous, of her friend Miss Elizabeth Joy, of Waltham. For eight years after the family moved to Concord Mrs. Ripley had no servant; and during three of these years, while her youngest daughter went daily to a school in Boston, she rose and had her breakfast ready by half-past five o'clock in the morning.

"When I first knew Mrs. Ripley, Mrs. Simmons, her well-loved daughter Mary, whose husband had died in 1855, was at the head of the house, and Mrs. Ripley had finally given up the management of it. She was then no longer taking pupils. In the summer she used to occupy herself for a while in the morning with the garden, gathering vegetables and preparing them, or in other such light labor; generally, at least in the cooler weather, she took a long daily walk, even up to the later periods of her life; for the rest she betook herself to the delights of her books, or helped in the care of the grandchildren whom she so fondly loved. If friends came in, they were sure of a welcome and of the most friendly and earnest conversation, whenever her health permitted. In general, her health was good; she had a constitution which was naturally strong and even tough; but at Waltham her severe labors had sometimes prostrated her, and during her later years at Concord she had one or two serious attacks of illness. At Waltham, as her letters show, she used to sit up late into the night, finding in these quiet hours the best, if not the only, time for her own studies and correspondence and the family sewing,—for she made all the children's clothes and did all the mending of the family, including that of the hired man. At Concord she went early to bed, but always waked early in the morning. She ate generously from a simple but admirably provided table, and drank both coffee and tea; nor did she on occasion decline a glass of wine, although this was never seen on her own table.

"Mr. Sanborn, Mr. Channing, and other friends kept her largely supplied with the new books, and she read them eagerly, especially some of the newer contributions to natural science: the writings of Darwin and his supporters she cordially welcomed. She read few novels. Her letters show how various her literary work had been during her earlier life. She had been a student of metaphysics, but when I knew her she seemed to have rested from her severer labors and turned especially to literature; she read at this time a good deal of German, Italian, and French, as well as Latin and Greek;

Spanish, also, she studied in her last years. Of Shakspeare and Milton she read much; of Goethe, Jean Paul, Rousseau, and Cervantes she was very fond; and so of Ariosto, of Euripides, of Theocritus, of Tacitus. Botany, and especially the study of lichens, was a life-long interest, and she was curious as to the habits of animals, especially birds. Her intense sympathy for all living creatures was remarkable: and very pretty it was to see her devotion to a neglected fowl or to watch her on an autumn walk as she held some chilled butterfly and brought it back to life by the warmth of that kindly hand.

"She used often to visit us at Milton, and once a year went for a week or two to Duxbury. At Milton she always explored and re-explored my little library, and delighted in finding now and then something that was new to her; I remember especially her satisfaction in Masson's Life of Milton. But she never tired of her old authors, and often called on us to share her pleasure in the great phrases of the Paradise Lost, in the Life of Agricola, in an ode of Pindar, or in the fifteenth idyll of Theocritus; in this last poem, the lively and natural gossip of the two Syracusan women was something of which she never tired.

"But why do I not speak and what shall I not say of her happiness in her grandchildren, and of theirs in her, both at Concord and at Milton? She was so gentle with them, so sympathetic, so quick to understand them, and she entered so heartily into their ways, that she became a sort of contemporary or even younger playmate. But she bred in them unconsciously all the while a tenderness and sensibility akin to her own; like Wordsworth's sister,—

> 'She gave them eyes, she gave them ears,
> And humble cares and delicate fears,
> A heart the fountain of sweet tears,
> And love and thought and joy.'

Alas that she could be no longer with them!

"At Concord she did not visit much, but was rather sought after and visited by others,—her neighbors and her old pupils and their parents or friends; on Thanksgiving Day, however,

she used to dine, with all her family, at the house of her husband's kinsman and her own dear friend, Mr. Emerson, and for many years she passed every Sunday evening there. Among the visitors to her own house were many strangers who had found their way to see the 'Old Manse' that Hawthorne had made famous: sometimes these visits were those of vulgar intrusion; in such cases she knew how to protect herself by a cold reserve; for affectation or servility she had no response.

"She had great happiness in the cheerful and assiduous care of her children, who appreciated and loved her with the utmost affection: upon their care she grew in later years to be very dependent. It was a fine sight to witness the last preparations for her going out upon a call, or her Sunday evening walk to Mr. Emerson's, when her children took her in hand, swiftly rejecting much that she had done, shaking her up, and setting her to rights,—while, with laughing remonstrances, she yielded to the cheerful breeze.

"Had, then, this sweet and wise person no defects? Of *faults* I know not one; but there were, perhaps, some limitations of thought and sympathy. In general, she inquired little and cared not much to concern herself about the conduct of any social or public affairs; she would never read a newspaper; and she had little of the public spirit that gave so much character to the life of her contemporary, Mrs. Lyman, of Northampton, whose biography has lately been printed. An exception ought to be made in regard to the anti-slavery discussion, in which she had great interest. The war, also, forced itself most tragically upon her attention, and again and again it bowed her down with sympathetic distress; for she had many friends in the army on both sides, and her own youngest son had entered on the side of the Union, at the beginning of the contest, and died near Vicksburg, in 1863, worn out with labors heroically assumed and heroically carried through.

"The reader of Mrs. Ripley's letters will see repeated allusions to what she called, in reference to certain matters of religion, a want of faith. Akin to this was another criticism upon herself which I have heard her make,—that she lacked

somewhat of the faculty which appreciates the imaginative aspects of nature.

"As to this last, she did not indeed seem—certainly while I knew her—to care much to stop in the midst of her admirations or to go back upon them,—to discriminate and bring to light the particular objects or grounds of her liking. But surely she had a very keen and special delight in nature, and her undiscriminated happiness in it seemed worth far more than any analyzed and self-recognized appreciation of the critic: it was more like that of a healthy child, who is not so much a spectator of nature as a sharer with it in a common impulse and a common delight. She seemed, as she herself says somewhere of one of her relatives, to belong to the landscape, and to be the companion and friend of the natural objects among which she walked; so that when, during the night after she was brought home to the 'Old Manse,' dead, one of the tall ash-trees in the front avenue fell and in the morning lay prostrate on the ground,—it was like a hint of sympathy in nature: easy was it then, and to the imagination neither trivial nor untrue, to think that this old neighbor had felt the shock of grief.

"And something of the same sort is to be said as to the religious side of Mrs. Ripley's character. In her youth she had been deeply impressed on religious subjects, and had thought and studied much about them; but her mind, a keen and analytic one, was displeased with the shallowness of much that passes current; and found more difficulties also in accepting some of the best-received opinions than it could meet. One might think, whether rightly or not, that she was too much disposed to dwell on speculative difficulties; that she undervalued certain historical and traditional aspects of the question, or did not enough consider the necessary conditions of all public and institutional religion; that she was too unwilling to entertain some great and ennobling, but unproved and unprovable, beliefs, merely as being dear to the human heart; that she lacked, perhaps, somewhat of the religious imagination. Certainly her thoughtful, aspiring, eager spirit

was little disposed to follow along the ordinary lines of religious speculation or expression. But some of her letters will show what a sweet and natural piety she cherished:* she had thought too much and was too large-minded to dogmatize, and so she always heartily sympathized with others in their faith, and in their good hopes and expectations; her own soul was at peace, and rested, profoundly, in the conviction that all is well. She was in harmony with whatsoever was most good, most true, and most spiritual. If any noble object of human aspiration or endeavor were brought to her attention, she thrilled all through with sympathy for it; if there were any office of good will to be done, however humble and unwelcome, she hastened to do it. And she seemed, always, as one that 'lay in Abraham's bosom all the year.'"

A few out of many letters to her youngest daughter, Sophy, will now be given. To this daughter are addressed most of the latest letters, beginning with the date of her marriage and residence in Milton, in April, 1861, and ending only when declining strength denied the power of written expression to the love whose flame was one with life.

MRS. RIPLEY TO HER DAUGHTER MRS. THAYER.

"DEAR SOPHY,—

"It is good to hear from you so often by your visitors who report you well and happy. How could it be otherwise having but one interest with a friend so worthy of his trust? I am living in the prospect of seeing you soon, but I am afraid of the reaction when you go. I was so brave and disinterested at first that I believed all selfishness was forever merged in the thought of your pleasant and happy home. We hear of your visitors still. It reminds me of our first experience of Concord life. The weeks were marked by a constant series of salutations and farewells. There is no danger even now that the hinges of the doors will rust."

* See especially her letter to Mr. Simmons of April 22, 1845.

"DEAR SOPHY,—

"I cannot let Lizzie go to you empty-handed, though the week's stockings from both houses are staring me in the face. The asparagus bed, with its endless weeds, takes great part of my mornings, but neither fruits, flowers, nor weeds can vie with you. I am picking up some strength in the asparagus bed, wrestling with the weeds. I charge you, as Dr. Allyn did the old minister at his ordination, to set out an asparagus bed. You can't think how little I know of what is going on in the penetralia of the establishment. As I am relieved from its duties, I am secure from its labors and vexations, which I hope you have escaped forever, though there are always recruits enough in the march of life. May heaven send you a niggard share and give you strength to wrestle with them! If you have no more stumbling-blocks than how thick to make flour starch, I fear you have not gone far in the march.

"I want all the family to see how pleasantly you are situated. I do not remember particulars enough to be a satisfactory narrator. It is sad to think that I am so fast becoming good for nothing for society, but, thank heaven, I led a lonely life of study in my youth, and return to it as rest with satisfaction. Thank heaven, the flowers still bloom, the birds sing, the Greek tragedies have floated down the stream of time, I can love and dream still of those who are dear to me, till absorbed into the bosom of the Infinite from which I came.

"You do not know how much I miss you, not only when I struggle in and out of my mortal envelopes, and pump my nightly potation, and no longer pour into your sympathizing ear my senile gossip; but all the day I muse away, almost unconscious that I am a member still of this busy house, since the sound of your voice no longer rouses me to sympathy with your joys or sorrows."

"DEAR SOPHY,—

"You cannot know how much I miss your affectionate demonstrations. At home my position is expected to be that of the philosopher; but, alas! the expectation is rarely fulfilled.

The tears of yesterday are nearly dried up, and I hope in small domestic offices to fill up the days to come. Beans and stockings will come in to aid, and then there is one bright spot,—Lizzie Simmons will still hold on; and you can imagine how satisfactory it will be to listen to Tacitus, a pleasure connected with days long gone by. Humble offices will while away the longest day when devoted to love or duty, and the prospect of seeing you will be like the star in the east, to which I shall look like the shepherds of old. There is often nowadays a solitude of the heart which nothing can fill except your image; but, as that is still encircled with a halo of soft and sweet enjoyment, it ought to be as satisfactory at least as the reality—that is, yourself—sweeping or sewing, for the old house."

"G.'s letter of yesterday shows that he is disabused of his first notion,—that the war is to be set down to some mistake or mismanagement on the part of the President. It is strange to hear him talk of joining the army. The Northern enthusiasm gives me a new idea of the love of country as an idea realized. Who could have dreamed a year ago of political cabals, private interests, 'hunkerdom,' as Carlyle would call it, merged in one grand stream of men and money uniting to preserve the Union? I neither know nor care for politics in any form, and yet I am drawn into the vortex."

[June, 1861.]

"DEAR SOPHY,—

"The weekly bulletin due from my den will be delayed till Monday on account of Ezra's patriotism. We received a message from him that on Friday he should appear at the Old Manse with his company, and should expect plenty of lemonade and a hearty welcome. They marched up, as the Fitchburg Railroad was not patriotic enough to bring them gratis; arrived about twelve o'clock at Concord Square, found

an entertainment provided for them gratis at the town hall, to which the two families contributed cake and pies. Emma, as usual, was ready with sandwiches and other dainties. After the repast was cheering, and Ezra introduced John Garrison* to them and explained his relation to Concord and himself, and so John got an extra cheer. Then they moved to the Monument, followed, of course, by men, women, and children. There George Brooks welcomed them with a patriotic address. We went through the orchard and looked over the wall. After the speech was over and a salute returned, they leaped over the wall and marched through the high grass, through the entry, and out of the front door, where they were treated to plenty of lemonade. Then Ezra showed them the miniatures of the fathers and grandfathers of the Revolution, and, after a tremendous noise which they called a military salute, they turned their faces homeward, to march as far as Lexington, and ride from there to Boston. Ezra expressed his gratitude for the entertainment, and seemed not at all disposed to give up his purpose. To me it seemed anything but a merry meeting. I am no Spartan mother.—I am looking forward to Phœbe's vacation. It is now the great event of the week to look for her on Saturday. I have not had the sick headache so much as usual since I gave up tea for wine, but I cannot understand why I am available for so little in the way of walking or working as I was a year ago."

"We are sweeping and garnishing your room for Harriet.† I look forward to her coming to mingle my tears with hers, for it is heresy here to be sad about the war. How undeveloped a race must be that cannot settle its affairs except by blood and murder! War seems to me no better than legalized

* A colored man, who had been for many years a servant of the family, and who was a much-esteemed citizen of Concord.

† The wife of her son Ezra.

murder. But women do not know much, and their opinion is only worth *that much.*

"I hope you will not be discouraged by hard times: the hardest seem to me to be the loss of great and good men. I am regarded at home as a regular 'croak.'"

"Harriet is spending the week with us. Her cheerful self-sacrifice to Ezra's convictions raises her much in my esteem; he is her idol, and I shudder to think of the chances of war in her behalf. He seems to have enough to do for his fellow-beings, and to enjoy his work."

"Sept.—If anything can wake me from the nightmare of war, it is a letter in your handwriting. I have just now escaped from my room, beneath the window of which the boys are gathering grapes; Will is in his dancing suit, as he makes his débût in the art so important to the young man when he is attracted into the magic circle of grace and beauty; he has resisted manfully, but is obliged to surrender at last; he has appeared in his best suit, but cannot resist a bite at the grapes, notwithstanding many premonitory admonitions. We are actually buried beneath pears and apples. We cannot find barrels or baskets to receive them; and our neighbors are in the same predicament. I believe Lizzy begins to see her way through them by her administrative and philanthropic skill.

"I can no longer aid the household labors by paring apples, as my fingers have made a stand: so I withdraw my diminished head, and give myself up to study,—study, I say, for ordinary reading soon ends in ennui or gaping. I am now in close conflict with a Spanish singing girl, to whom I am often obliged to nod instead of an answer. I was right glad to know that you are shaking hands with your old friends again. I would quote Cicero if I could do it correctly, '*Hæc studia juventutem delectant,*' etc.,—but you can find the sentence.

How pleasant it must be for you that James's tendencies are in the same direction! I always count upon spurring up my drowsing faculties by a visit at Milton."

"Things go on as usual. I am always anxious about events, and make mountains out of mole-hills. Like the philosopher in Rasselas, I shall imagine by and by that I have a responsibility about the motions of the heavenly bodies. To drive off hobgoblins I have taken to reading Spanish, and have defeated Belisarius and plunged into a real Spanish tale. What a vista!—a whole new language! Mrs. Goodwin likes to hear reading, so I read French novels to her and all the war matters, while she knits and sews for the soldiers,—and comfort my conscience in that way for my shortcomings.

"This fearful, destructive war clouds my horizon, not so much for what I have at stake as for what seem to me the horrible results of massacre and pillage. I sit in my solitary chamber 'and count the ghastly phantoms as they pass.'"

[Nov. 1861.]

"A terrific night, rain pouring, windows rattling, but Lizzie is up to all occasions, and I feel as safe under her patrol as if it were a regular night-guard. Uncle George and Arly* still cry hallelujah for the war, but such a sad tale as that of young Putnam† and his desolate mother breaks my heart. Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness, far from the echo of human sorrow! I wish this sad topic had not darkened this page to you, for the thought of you and your happy home is my star by night. . . . Yesterday the boys set forth with their guns, but it rained, and they returned to seek entertainment, quilting balls in my chamber. I contributed old stockings, and they quilted each a ball, which destroyed two hours at least of the enemy."

---

* The children's word for "Aunt Lizzie,"—Miss Elizabeth Ripley.

† William Lowell Putnam, killed at Ball's Bluff, October 21, 1861.

"DEAR SOPHY,—

"I have just returned from my walk round the square this splendid morning, and, now that I have recovered breath, propose to devote the next hour to you. I was, or rather am, afraid that you will think I have forgotten you after such a blank in the line of correspondence; but my army friends have written me long letters, and they are far off and plead earnestly for home news. Charles * especially writes long and interesting letters, with ever and anon a flower or a weed unlike what he has seen at home, and asks for its name or that of its family. We shall soon lose Gore, and I am sad to think how long it may be before I see him again."

"It is long since I have held converse with you, yet the thought of you is my Ave and my Vigile,—with answering letters from my army friends and mending stockings for both houses, not to mention the additions to Gore's outfit for Minnesota. Yesterday I bade him a sad adieu, for age is naturally foreboding. I cannot now imagine any errand which can bring him home for many a day. He left us for Washington, where he hopes to catch a glimpse of Charles. We get letters almost every week from Charles or Ezra. E. says, in his letter of Oct. 22d, 'Everything now looks like fighting in good earnest. In addition to some fifty ships of war and transports already in our harbor, to-day saw the arrival of ten more steamboats loaded down with troops, making an addition of some ten thousand to the ten thousand here before. And the busy signaling from ship to ship, the noise of the steam as it is constantly kept up on board, the frequent shrill whistle and the active plying of the tugs, all tell us that an expedition is soon to start in earnest.'†

---

* Charles F. Simmons, then Adjutant-General of the Fourteenth Massachusetts Regiment, stationed at Fort Albany near Washington.

† This was the expedition to Port Royal which sailed from Fortress Monroe, at the end of October, 1861.

"Did you see in the report of the last defeat the familiar names of several of our old scholars and acquaintances? I am sad over the loss of lives of so much worth. They fill my day and night dreams."

"Mrs. G. is coming to spend Sunday. Lizzie says we shall not sympathize in our feeling toward England, for she is angry and I am grieved. England is to me as a vindictive parent to whom I owe so much that I could make almost any sacrifice. I have been from my earliest remembrance fed from her table with the choicest dainties of literature and science. The noble blood of her patriots and martyrs flows in my veins; and nothing that their descendants can do will cancel the debt.

"I am writing in my little den lighted by the midday sun, which is shining brighter and brighter every day, foretelling bursting blossoms and singing birds. I wonder if my first experience of a morning in Concord can ever be repeated, —the bright river which I welcomed as my own, the trees covered with chattering blackbirds, good as rooks, the feeling that I had at last a *home*. What a home indeed it has been to me, which I would not exchange for all that wealth or art have to offer!"

"This year with the war is to bring a new era in Christmas-presents. The boys are to have their money and spend it as they please. I think we shall be allowed to sleep quietly in our beds till daylight at least. Yet I cannot but regret the childish pleasure of unexpected surprises and noisy salutes, and eager desires to see and show. Youth and manhood have their joys likewise, but the spectre of distrust and disappointment is too often in the rear.

"I am much obliged to James for the nice edition of the Greek plays. We have not yet read these. They are much better as to type than mine. Mr. Sanborn is still faithful to Monday readings."

"Charles has come from Detroit, with a cough and the remains of intermittent fever, and is about to try a voyage to some one of the West India islands, to escape our trying spring. How glad I am that he can call this house his home whenever he needs the affection and comforts of one! He seems to me like a brother."

The reference in this letter is to Charles F. Simmons, the brother of Mrs. Ripley's son-in-law, and the last survivor of the family. Having entered the army, he had been obliged to go to a Western State, and afterwards to the West Indies, in search of health. The vessel in which he sailed—on February 25, 1862,—was never heard from.*

In the next mention of this friend, she says,—

"There is a cloud over this house, for you know how long it is since there has been any news of Charles. Will it not be sad if the waves have closed over the last of this talented and attractive family? I can say, with King David, 'Very pleasant hast thou been to me.' I shall never see his place filled or look back on any like association."

[April, 1862.]

"Yesterday was Fast-day, and, to my surprise and delight, Mr. Hedge came. It was so good to have him come of his own accord. I never saw him look better; but it was sad that I was the only one left to greet him, except E."

"May, 1862.

"This fine morning is sad for those of us who sympathize with the friends of Henry Thoreau the philosopher and the woodman. He had his reason to the last, and talked with his friends pleasantly, and arranged his affairs, and at last passed in quiet sleep from this state of duty and responsibility to that

* A sketch of Mr. Simmons is found in the first volume of the "Harvard Memorial Biographies."

which is behind the veil. His funeral service is to be at the church, and Mr. Emerson is to make an address.

"How pleasant it is to see the promise of the coming year! The children are crazy as usual about anemones and violets, and glasses are filled to a surfeit. They never look so pretty as in their own first habitat, where nature has had the arranging of them.

"I have had George Sand's autobiography,—to me well worth reading."

"I went to the post-office, and when I got home I found Dr. Francis on his annual visit. In the evening we were all together in the red parlor, and there was much laughing and talking of the young people. At last he fell back on me, as I had toled him by the mention of Leibnitz which Mr. Hedge has lately sent me, and into the depths of which I am about to dive, for want of smaller fish nearer the surface.

"To-morrow is the last day of school, and Mary is to give the girls a dancing-party, if she can get a violinist, as our old one is too patriotic to play in war time."

"Last evening we took tea in the kitchen, Lizzy, M., and I. It seemed like primeval days, when we turned our back upon the boys and winged our way to Concord. Did not we revel in freedom, and washing dishes?"

"Friendships which were the light of that dreary passage of constant labor and homesick boys. But you do not like to have me speak so of a home which health and freedom made happy to you, and of petty trials which now seem to me a cheap price for my Concord abode of freedom and rest for what remains to me of life and hope."

"E. is resolved that M. B. shall pronounce German right, and will no doubt succeed, in spite of resistance. There is nothing that I regret more than the want of that accomplishment; but self-education is not favorable thereto."

[Oct. or Nov., 1862.]

"Gore's communications are not very exhilarating. He wishes he were in the army; would be willing to go as a private in Ezra's company, but feels obliged to stay where he is. The Indians in the country where he is, have taken advantage of the war to ravage the neighborhood. They have, he says, murdered hundreds of women and children."

"Harriet sent us Ezra's last letter. He is stationed at Harper's Ferry, where the Fury laid the first egg of this dire war. There seems to be quiet now, but all the interim is 'like a phantasma or a hideous dream' to me. With what bright sunny days nature shines on this blood-stained earth! I am looking forward to your promised visit, and hope for a day or two at least to look on a brighter side of things. I go as usual one or two days in the week to reconnoitre Mary's stocking-basket. She gets but little time to sew, and is glad of a lift.

"Lizzie Simmons with her Latin and Greek fills an hour or so. I never nod in the presence of Homer and Tacitus.

"We have been reading a book of very interesting travels in the interior of Africa, a subject in which I did not think I ever could take any interest, but this traveling object was natural science, and the stories of African life and manners we have found very agreeable, besides having made acquaintance with full-grown and baby gorillas, not to mention other singular animals as well as plants."

In these days, however, friends came and went, as of old. She says, "Lizzy keeps the hinges of the old doors still bright.

I never could have believed that she would have made the old house such a place of resort for such a variety of guests, and assort them so well together."

"We did not expect our visitors, but Lizzy is inexhaustible in resources; her larder is never failing in dainties of some sort and served with the best grace."

[January, 1863.]

"To see your dear image is next to seeing your dear self. It does not quite come up to the mark, but it is very good, and I shall treasure it among the other shadows of the beloved ones from whose realities the waves of time are fast removing me. I wish I could see your dear mother and yourself, but I have no spirits left for visiting in these dreadful days of anxiety and destruction. How generous Gam's contribution to Ezra was! If he knew how much I thought of it, he would need no thanks. . . . I was alone all day at Milton the day of Sidney Willard's funeral,* and sad indeed it was. We should not mourn so, if lives did not seem thrown away by mismanagement and mistakes."

"My dear Sophy,—

"How kind you were to write me such an interesting account of your whereabout and what you were doing, at such a busy time! I know your energy and zeal for labor at home and abroad. I must tell you about my present from Abby Francis. She wrote to ask which of her father's books I should like, as she wished me to have a choice. She has sent

---

* Sidney Willard, the son of old and valued friends of Mrs. Ripley, was killed in battle at Fredericksburg, in December, 1862. He was Major of the Thirty-fifth Massachusetts Regiment, and was in command of it at the time of his death. A sketch of him is given in the first volume of the "Harvard Memorial Biographies."

me an elegant set of Plato, with other valuable books. I never dreamed of such a present. The old books on the shelf have descended, and my eyes rest with such delight on the visions of the immortal Greek that perchance I may forget my mission in this modern world. If I dreamed of the old inspired one, it was in a rusty garb, moth-eaten; but in such gilt and bright apparel I shall be unwilling to have unconsecrated hands placed upon him.

"Orisons ascend daily for those nearer and dearer to whom I am so much indebted. I have but one ardent wish, that I may see the object of your care and kindness* worthy and grateful for what you have done for him. The sun is so bright that Davy's flowers are basking in it at my window. The little orange-bush still puts forth new leaves. Ask him if he will not some day refresh grandma's old eyes with a sight of his handwriting. I hope he is a good boy.

"I read Fanny's† letter this morning with much pleasure. No one can know how dear she is to me. I hailed with great joy her mother's advent, tended and watched over her feeble childhood, and closed her eyes in death. Now I have nothing to do but think of those who are gone. 'My brothers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?' But dear ones still are left: if I could insure their happiness I would ask for nothing more.

"Don't think I am sad beyond measure; far from it, in this sunny room, with David's nursery of plants before my sunny window, and in my mind his happy home. Sunday is no longer a bugbear; I am not listening to hear what he is doing or where he is wandering that he should not. I am sure I can never repay James or yourself for making such a change in his present environment and future prospects.

"Tell Davy his flowers flourish, and the little rose-bush, so unwilling to yield to the sweet influences of the light from my

---

* David Loring, the son of her daughter Ann.

† The daughter of her sister Margaret, now Mrs. Francis Howland, of Englewood, New Jersey.

sunny window, has at last sent forth six new leaves, small, to be sure, but precursors of future beauty.

"I hope he gives you no more trouble than the name boy necessarily carries with it."

"I arrived home safely on Saturday, I cannot say with joy, for the image of the dear little boy behind, and the long time I might be without him, filled my mind. I hope he will not forget me.

"Mr. Sanborn more than keeps us up in books. He brought a story by De Foe,—'Colonel Jack,'—the most melancholy picture you can conceive of the suffering of poor neglected beings, who beg or steal from their earliest years, know no parents, sleep in glass-houses buried in warm ashes, have no companions better off than themselves, and yet a vital spark of principle innate, or rather sympathy, keeps them from utter ruin.

"What should I do without books in these latter days? '*Nam cetera neque temporum sunt neque ætatum omnium, neque locorum. At hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent; delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.*' So says Cicero, and I subscribe; and so will you, if you live to be old and feel lonely."

"You cannot think how I miss David in these bright days. The other day at noon I looked out of the window and saw the ridge of the barn covered entirely with a row of doves. They seemed as if they had come to inquire for their old master and ask why the usual treat of corn was no longer there."

"Mr. Sanborn came to see me last night. He is faithful to his old friends, and I look for Mr. Channing with a new book

every day. The Don still continues my chief resource. I am far advanced in the third volume, and can read quite well, —that is, to myself. I wish I knew how to pronounce it. I am quite proud to add it to French and Italian, and have some insight into the wit, which is considered so rare. It is narrated in the life of Pope, that a gentleman was advised by a nobleman to study the Spanish language, and when the said gentleman reported his progress, instead of being appointed to some mission, as he expected, he received for his answer that he envied him the pleasure of reading Don Quixote in the original. Those who read to kill time are not subjected to such disappointments.

"Mr. Sanborn announced his determination to give up his school last night when he came to read with me. He is to join Mr. Conway in editing a paper. We are all very sorry to lose him."

There is no letter of Mrs. Ripley's which makes any express reference to the death of her youngest son, Ezra, in the war, in the summer of 1863. Painful as that event was to her, she seemed to lose the thought of her own sorrow in grieving over that of her daughter-in-law, childless and now a widow. The body of her son was brought home, and lies buried in the Concord cemetery.*

"I am looking forward in the hope of seeing Gore once more, and imagining him in a happy home for the future. I have but one hope left,—that I may not survive all who are dear to me. I wish I could discuss with you divers questions on the subject of Gore's wedding.† I think I shall go, whenever and wherever it is, though I risk taking cold, and brave fashion in my apparel. Concord is awake, as usual at this

* A sketch of Ezra Ripley is given in the first volume of the "Harvard Memorial Biographies."

† Mrs. Ripley's eldest son was married in December, 1863, to Mrs. Frances Gage, of Boston.

period of the year. When Mr. Sanborn got up his school he founded with it an institution for collecting together a shoal of agreeable young ladies, who continue to convene together at this season of the year, the train lessening as time passes on, thinning their number by marriage or death.

"I should write a longer answer to your note, which I was so glad to get this morning, if Mr. Channing had not brought me an interesting book on the fructification of flowers by insects, which I must read."

"D. is keeping up her lessons with Uncle George. Like all bright girls when they first leave school, she feels the need of something to fill up the gap between the past and present. The desire soon dies out with most young ones, but it is good to see it and foster it while it lasts, and there is always the chance and hope that it may be lasting and decide the character for higher aims than fashion and frivolous amusement."

At the birth of Mrs. Bradford's grandson Gamaliel, the sixth of that name in the direct line from Governor William Bradford of the Plymouth Colony, Mrs. Ripley writes to her sister-in-law:

MRS. RIPLEY TO MRS. BRADFORD.

[Oct. 1863.]

"DEAR SOPHIA,—

"Though it is Sunday morning, before church-time, I cannot wait, my sympathy with you all is so earnest, to welcome the dear little stranger. How proud you all must be that he has hit the mark, and does not intend that the name of the first emigrants for liberty and truth shall die out! Nevertheless he must remember his responsibilities, likewise, for a blot on his escutcheon would be worse than no escutcheon at all. I shall not live, perchance, to criticise the result, but send the

best wishes of an aged aunt, to those most interested in his début and future success. I hope we shall see you all again under happier auspices than these dark days have been to me."

In February, 1866, a second son was born in the household at Milton, and she writes to her daughter as follows:

MRS. RIPLEY TO MRS. THAYER.

"DEAR SOPHY,—

"Many a time and oft I have been homesick for the dear little boy, but I did not think his place would be so soon filled by another, as good and pretty, no doubt, but not the one we know and love. How I wish I were not so old, that I cannot help you take care of and comfort him when another has taken his place! I don't think, however, any one can take his place in my heart. The new-comer is to take Ezra's name. I long to see him. Ever so much hope and love from your affectionate mother and to your dear husband."

At another time she writes,—

"Lizzy advises me to write to you this morning. The wind is blowing so furiously that I dare not venture on a walk. How I long to see the dear little boys together! In spite of predilections and disappointments as to sex, I love him already, and shall stand by him in spite of his *dark locks*. How I count the hours till Concord is made rich to me by a sight of the dear ones!"

In August, 1866, she made her last visit to Duxbury, the home of her ancestors, and of dear friends and cousins still living. She had been to Milton on the way, and wrote from Duxbury to her son-in-law thus:

"DUXBURY, August 15th, 1866.

"DEAR JAMES,—

"I was delighted to see the face of the dear little boy and

to know that you are all safe at home and thriving. I found the friends all well at Old Colony, and was received with a hearty welcome. Everything looks bright and flourishing. The early apples are fit for baking, and the odor of the pine-cones sweet as in former days. I took a walk in the pine grove near the cemetery yesterday morning, and crept down the hill into a deep ravine we used to call the bowl, covered with decayed leaves, where we used to play tea with acorns for fairy cups: the acorns and the cups remain, but the charm is gone, never to return. Nevertheless love and friendship still remain, and will as long as the heart beats and those that look out of the windows are not utterly darkened. I hope to see you all before long, when I hope I shall be quite well, and able to help you, or rather Sophy, in the care of the little ones. I begin to miss Phœbe and David, and hope soon to be at home to hear their story at first and not at second-hand. Sarah Ellison is still at Duxbury. I have made no visits as yet; the old folks are all gone, and the young ones 'know not Joseph,' but the dream of the past comes up with sweet odor, and will as long as life shall last.

"Your affectionate mother,

"S. A. R."

Early in 1867 she began to write to her little grandson, Willy, then three years old, but had written only a few lines when she changed the address. The letter is as follows:

"How we will run about and pick the fresh flowers, and Gamma will tell you their names and put them in the glass vases! Now the fair days are coming, I think we shall like the flowers in the field better than those in the garden; but both are beautiful in their time. If grandma wants a garden, you will be willing to help her, like a kind little boy.—Dear James and Sophy, I hope to be with you before long and finish this romance which has given me such pleasure. You cannot think how much I have enjoyed in my childish compositions: they have helped off and whiled away many a

weary hour. I am afraid I shall be very jealous when others come to take their share.

* * * * * * * * * *

"Mary is an angel of promise, and makes me as happy as any old worn-out being can expect to be.

* * * * * * * * * *

"Oh, how I count the days till the dear little fellows will be here! I have plans for their amusement. I hope they will have a good time. Every day will bring a flower. How pleasant it will be to be with you and the dear ones! I shall live another life. I may be childish, but there are no limits to love.

"Your affectionate mother,

"S. A. R."

And with these beautiful words, ends her last letter. Gradually failing strength brought now a short eclipse. She remained at Concord, in the house of her daughter Mary, and there, in the arms of her children, in the summer of 1867, she fell asleep. Of these last days her friend Mr. Sanborn has beautifully said, "At length there came a time, after many shocks to her health and her affections given by bereaving age, when even such unselfish pleasures were denied to this sweetest of human souls. He who drops or withdraws the veil at the gates of mortal life was pleased to make her removal hence after the joys of earth had ceased to touch her with delight, and when the spectacle of her affliction reconciled those about her to the interposition of death. She has carried with her beyond these shores of anguish and doubt the love of a thousand friends and the enduring record of well-spent days."

Five of Mrs. Ripley's children survive her,—the three oldest daughters, Elizabeth, Mary, and Phœbe; her oldest son, Christopher Gore,—for many years a lawyer in Minnesota, and chief justice of that State at the time of his retirement from business; and her youngest daughter, Sophia.

On the stone which marks Mrs. Ripley's grave in the beau-

tiful cemetery at Concord, her children placed an inscription containing a part of the passage with which Tacitus ends his Life of Agricola. It was a passage which was specially dear to her: many of her friends will recall the fine glow of feeling with which she has read or quoted it; and to these it will always be associated with her memory. I cannot better close this imperfect sketch of her life than by giving the whole of it: of no one was it ever more worthily spoken than of her. The words inclosed in brackets are those which are on her gravestone.

"Si quis piorum manibus locus; si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore exstinguuntur magnæ animæ; [placide quiescas, nosque, domum tuam, ab infirmo desiderio et muliebribus lamentis ad contemplationem virtutum tuarum voces, quas neque lugeri neque plangi fas est: admiratione te potius, temporalibus laudibus, et, si natura suppeditet, similitudine decoremus.] Is verus honos, ea conjunctissimi cujusque pietas. Id filiæ quoque uxorique præceperim, sic patris, sic mariti memoriam venerari, ut omnia facta dictaque ejus secum revolvant; famamque ac figuram animi magis quam corporis complectantur: non quia intercedendum putem imaginibus, quæ marmore aut ære finguntur, sed ut vultus hominum, ita simulacra vultus imbecilla ac mortalia sunt, forma mentis æterna, quam tenere et exprimere non per alienam materiam et artem, sed tuis ipse moribus possis. Quidquid ex Agricola amavimus, quidquid mirati sumus, manet mansurumque est in animis hominum, in æternitate temporum, fama rerum. Nam multos veterum, velut inglorios et ignobiles oblivio obruet: Agricola posteritati narratus et traditus superstes erit."

Out of a number of tender and appreciative notices of Mrs. Ripley's death which were written at the time, it seems well to add here one by Mr. R. W. Emerson, which has already been referred to, and another by Mr. Henry Lee, of Boston, one of her old pupils, for whom she always cherished a most cordial regard.

Mr. Emerson's notice was printed in the Boston "Daily Advertiser" of July 31, 1867, and is as follows:

"Died in Concord, Massachusetts, on the 26th of July, 1867, Mrs. Sarah Alden Ripley, aged seventy-four years. The death of this lady, widely known and beloved, will be sincerely deplored by many persons scattered in distant parts of the country, who have known her rare accomplishments and the singular loveliness of her character. A lineal descendant of the first governor of Plymouth Colony, she was happily born and bred. Her father, Gamaliel Bradford, was a sea-captain of marked ability, with heroic traits which old men will still remember, and though a man of action yet adding a taste for letters. Her brothers, younger than herself, were scholars, but her own taste for study was even more decided. At a time when perhaps no other young woman read Greek, she acquired the language with ease and read Plato,—adding soon the advantage of German commentators.

"After her marriage, when her husband, the well-known clergyman of Waltham, received boys in his house to be fitted for college, she assumed the advanced instruction in Greek and Latin, and did not fail to turn it to account by extending her studies in the literature of both languages. It soon happened that students from Cambridge were put under her private instruction and oversight. If the young men shared her delight in the book, she was interested at once to lead them to higher steps and more difficult but not less engaging authors, and they soon learned to prize the new world of thought and history thus opened. Her best pupils became her lasting friends. She became one of the best Greek scholars in the country, and continued, in her latest years, the habit of reading Homer, the tragedians, and Plato. But her studies took a wide range in mathematics, in natural philosophy, in psychology, in theology, as well as in ancient and modern literature. She had always a keen ear open to whatever new facts astronomy, chemistry, or the theories of light and heat had to furnish. Any knowledge, all knowledge, was

welcome. Her stores increased day by day. She was absolutely without pedantry. Nobody ever heard of her learning until a necessity came for its use, and then nothing could be more simple than her solution of the problem proposed to her. The most intellectual gladly conversed with one whose knowledge, however rich and varied, was always with her only the means of new acquisition. Meantime, her mind was purely receptive. She had no ambition to propound a theory, or to write her own name on any book, or plant, or opinion. Her delight in books was not tainted by any wish to shine, or any appetite for praise or influence. She seldom and unwillingly used a pen, and only for necessity or affection.

"But this wide and successful study was, during all the hours of middle life, only the work of hours stolen from sleep, or was combined with some household task which occupied the hands and left the eyes free. She was faithful to all the duties of wife and mother in a well-ordered and eminently hospitable household, wherein she was dearly loved, and where

'her heart
Life's lowliest duties on itself did lay.'

She was not only the most amiable, but the tenderest of women, wholly sincere, thoughtful for others, and, though careless of appearances, submitting with docility to the better arrangements with which her children or friends insisted on supplementing her own negligence of dress; for her own part indulging her children in the greatest freedom, assured that their own reflection, as it opened, would supply all needed checks. She was absolutely without appetite for luxury, or display, or praise, or influence, with entire indifference to trifles. Not long before her marriage, one of her intimate friends in the city, whose family were removing, proposed to her to go with her to the new house, and, taking some articles in her own hand, by way of trial artfully put into her hand a broom, whilst she kept her in free conversation on some speculative points, and this she faithfully carried across Boston Common, from Summer Street to Hancock Street, without hesitation or remark.

"Though entirely domestic in her habit and inclination, she was everywhere a welcome visitor, and a favorite of society, when she rarely entered it. The elegance of her tastes recommended her to the elegant, who were swift to distinguish her as they found her simple manners faultless. With her singular simplicity and purity, such as society could not spoil, nor much affect, she was only entertained by it, and really went into it as children into a theatre,—to be diverted,—while her ready sympathy enjoyed whatever beauty of person, manners, or ornament it had to show. If there was conversation, if there were thought or learning, her interest was commanded, and she gave herself up to the happiness of the hour.

"As she advanced in life, her personal beauty, not remarked in youth, drew the notice of all, and age brought no fault but the brief decay and eclipse of her intellectual powers."

The following article, by Mr. Lee, appeared in the Boston "Evening Transcript" of August 8, 1867:

"The following tribute comes from one who speaks from experiences which he treasures in his memory as among the richest blessings of his life. There are many with like grateful remembrances who will respond with all their hearts to his every word, and thank him for giving expression to their esteem and love for one who, whilst she was their teacher, was also the truest and kindest of friends,—almost a mother in the gentleness of her disinterested devotion to their best welfare.

"'Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.'

"And surely she needeth sleep; for if time is measured by sensations, her life has been prolonged beyond the mortal span; if we consider the work accomplished, who has achieved so much, for herself or for others? or if we meditate upon the Christian graces, the beatitudes of meekness, purity of heart, the charity which suffereth long and is kind, vaunteth not itself, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth in the truth, whose character was more complete, whose spirit more ready for its flight, than hers?

"The wife of the minister of a large country parish whose parochial labor she shared, the mother of a large family, the mistress of a household increased by boarding scholars, neither the heavy exactions of parishioners, nor importunate maternal pains and anxieties, nor household economies faithfully attended to, exhausted her: she still found time and strength to devote to two or three school-boys preparing for college, or more advanced students rusticated for idleness or academic misdemeanors. And what a wealth of learning and thought and feeling she poured out for these pupils! Illumined by her clear intellect, the knottiest problem was disentangled; embellished by such a lover of learning, the driest subject was made interesting. The veriest scapegrace was reduced to thoughtfulness, the most hopeless dullard caught a gleam of light; her faith in their intuitions and capabilities lifted them and shamed or encouraged them to efforts impossible under another instructor; for she did not merely impart instruction, she educated all the powers of the mind and heart. Many scholars now eminent can date their first glimpse of the region above, their first venture upon the steep path, to the loving enthusiasm, the cheering assurances, of this inspired teacher and friend; and they who fainted or strayed without fulfilling her confident predictions must look back with astonishment at this brilliant period of their lives and regret that her influence could not have been extended over a longer period.

"A mind alive to all the beauties of art and science and nature, a heart which warmed to the most unpromising pupil and kindled at the faintest ray of hope, naturally craved the company of kindred men and women of learning and thought, as they delighted in hers: this was Mrs. Ripley's true recreation after the toil and trouble of the day. And what pleasant parties used to gather round her hospitable fireside! what ambrosial nights, fondly remembered by the privileged persons who enjoyed them as actors or spectators! There were, probably, books she had not read, languages and sciences she had not learned, but she seemed to have explored every region

and to have intuitive ideas on every subject of interest. And over all these gifts and acquirements was thrown a veil of modesty so close that only by an impulse of sympathy or enthusiasm was it ever withdrawn; with a simplicity equally amusing and touching, she impressed you so little with her own wonderful powers, and referred so much to your sayings and doings, that you really went away wondering at your own brilliancy and doubting how much you had given, how much received.

"The eloquent lips are silent, the flashing eye is dull, the blush of modesty has faded from the cheek, the cordial smile will never again on this earth welcome the friends, old or young, humble or famous, neighbors or strangers, who sought this inspired presence. But the puzzled brain is clear again, the heavy heart joyful, immortal youth returned. With those she loved on earth she is seeing face to face what she here saw darkly.

"'Learn the mystery of progression duly;
Do not call each glorious change decay;
But know we only hold our treasures truly
When it seems as if they passed away.'"

ELIZABETH HOAR.

3 2044 029 914 033